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ABSTRACT

The main objectives of a Vilnius, Lithuania, seminar were to share experiences in curriculum reform to promote life skills for social inclusion. This was to be achieved through an exchange on principles, approaches and methodologies that inform processes of curriculum reform in life skills education. Most of the participants were senior education officers from national boards or ministries of education, representatives of teachers associations, and university faculty. Following the "Foreword" (Cecilia Braslavsky), this final report is divided into five sections. The first section, "Introduction," contains: "Responding to Social Exclusion through Curriculum Change" (Sobhi Tawil). The second section, "Historical Overview," contains: "Education Systems, Social Integration and Inequality" (Walo Hutmacher). The third section, "International Perspectives," includes: "Reforming School Curricula in Latin America: A Focus on Argentina" (Silvina Gvirtz and Silvina Larripa); and "Challenges of Social Inclusion in Northern Ireland: Citizenship and Life Skills" (Michael Arlow). The fourth section, "The Lithuanian Experience," includes: "Curriculum Reform in Lithuania: Lessons Learned" (Virginia Budiene); and "Education and Social Inclusion in Lithuania" (Pranas Gudynas). The fifth section, "Regional Perspectives from the Baltic and Scandinavian Countries," includes: "Curricular Reform and Life-Skills in Denmark" (Anette Ipsen and Jorgen Thorslund); "Developing Civic Education in Estonia" (Sulev Valdmaa); "Social Inclusion in Compulsory Schooling in Norway: Reflections on the 1994 and 1997 Reforms" (Sissel Anderson); and "Curriculum Development for Social Inclusion in Sweden" (Mai Beijer and Staffan Bolin). Appended are the participant list and seminar agenda. (BT)

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Curriculum Change and Social Inclusion: Perspectives from the Baltic and Scandinavian Countries. Final Report of the Regional Seminar held in Vilnius, Lithuania, 5-8. December 2001.

Sobhi Tawil, Editor

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CURRICULUM CHANGE AND SOCIAL INCLUSION:

PERSPECTIVES FROM THE BALTIC AND SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES

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Foreword

Cecilia Braslavsky

Since 1999, the International Bureau of Education (IBE) has been holding a series of regional training seminars in the field of curriculum policy development and management. The regional seminar for Baltic and Scandinavian countries on 'Curriculum development for social inclusion: lessons learned from recent reforms' was held in Vilnius, Lithuania, from 5 to 8 December 2001 in partnership with Open Society Fund–Lithuania and the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania. This meeting brought together some fifty participants from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Sweden. They consisted mainly of senior education officers from national boards or ministries of education, representatives of teachers' associations and university faculty. A large majority of those present came from Lithuania. Also present were resource persons from Argentina, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, as well as staff from the IBE.

The main objectives of the meeting were to share experiences in curriculum reform that would promote life-skills for social inclusion. This was to be achieved through an exchange on principles, approaches and methodologies that inform processes of curriculum reform in life-skills education. It was also hoped to explore the interest of the participants and mechanisms for possible further regional communication and co-operation on this subject, such as the creation of an Internet page providing access to training materials, continued dialogue on the issue, the exchange of personnel, technical assistance and a possible publication on curriculum reform for social inclusion.

After a keynote address giving a sociological overview of the historical role of formal education systems with regard to inequality and social cohesion, country presentations were made on the educational situation in Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Sweden, particularly from the point of view of social integration. This was followed by case studies on Argentina and Northern Ireland (United Kingdom) giving an international perspective. Three working groups were then set up on educational exclusion, cultural diversity and citizenship, and skills development and employment. A round-table brought together the participants with members of the Lithuanian National Education Forum. A student debate was also held on the theme of 'Do Lithuanian schools adequately provide for the skills required for successful social integration?'. Finally, several school visits were held to youth, multinational, integrated special education and mixed language schools in the vicinity of Vilnius.

The IBE wishes to express its gratitude to the Open Society Fund, Lithuania, its partner in organizing and funding the seminar and in producing this publication, without whose contribution this event could not have taken place. Equally, the IBE acknowledges the contribution of the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science whose support greatly facilitated the organization of the meeting.

The choice and presentation of the facts contained in this publication and the opinions expressed therein are not necessarily those of UNESCO-IBE and do not commit the Organization. The designations employed and the presentation of the material throughout this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNESCO-IBE concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

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INTRODUCTION

Responding to social exclusion through curriculum change

Sobhi Tawil

I. BACKGROUND

1. Exclusion and strains on social cohesion

Establishing stronger social cohesion within and among communities and nations is a necessary precondition for peace and stability, as well as for sustainable social and economic development. The past decade has seen growing international concern with social cohesion as the social fabric in all regions of the world has increasingly been under the strain of greater inequalities in income distribution, unemployment, marginalization, xenophobia, racial discrimination, school-based violence, organized crime and armed conflict. These diverse manifestations and causes of social exclusion point to the dissolution of bonds of trust between individuals and social groups, as well as to a weakening of respect for human life and dignity. Furthermore, these societal strains constitute important threats to social and political stability. The concept of social cohesion therefore clearly stems from deep concern about social exclusion and the way this is reproduced and exacerbated within contexts of economic transition, economic depression and political instability.

2. From exclusion to social inclusion

As a result, there has been increasing focus on social inclusion in view, not only of mitigating the impact of weakening social fabric and cohesion, but also of ensuring greater respect for the basic rights of individuals and groups. Emphasis on social exclusion therefore translates into a desire to enhance the inclusion of all individuals and groups into a pluralistic, just and cohesive society, particularly through equitable access to social services (health, education, housing, employment), security and justice, as well as to other social benefits. This attempt to enhance inclusion is directed particularly at those groups that are most excluded from full social, cultural, economic and political participation: they include a wide array of groups ranging from national minorities, the unemployed, youth, women, immigrants, refugees and internally displaced populations, street children, remote rural communities, people living with HIV/AIDS, asylum seekers, people with disabilities, to traveler families and to the elderly. It is important to note that, in many cases, it is a combination of multiple discriminations that leads to social exclusion of individuals and groups.

3. The role of education

It is now widely established that education systems often contribute to perpetuating social and economic disparities and inequalities as is illustrated by patterns of inequitable access to formal education based on a combination of factors related to gender, income level, residence and minority status. These inequities (as monitored by disparities in net enrolment ratios, retention, completion and literacy rates) are important sources of social exclusion and may be viewed as 'part of an intricate web of human rights violations' (World Education Forum, Dakar, 2000). Moreover, beyond educational deprivation and inequitable access to education and training, official curricular content may also contribute to maintaining and reproducing stereotypes and prejudice towards certain minority groups through the languages of instruction used (or not used), the teaching of history and geography, citizenship education and so forth. Similarly, while the content and unintended consequences of schooling may act as precipitating factors in the breakdown of social cohesion, formal education also has an important role to play in strengthening or rebuilding social fabric through enhanced social inclusion (International Conference on Education, Geneva, September 2001).

4. Curricula reform and life skills

Educational reform to enhance social inclusion may include a wide array of measures at the levels of policy, management, curricula content and teacher training, ranging from legislative measures of positive discrimination in access to formal education, to inclusive education for learners with special needs, as well as curricular reform. Reform to update curricula by incorporating new knowledge, skills and attitudes is one important way in which the provision of education may be adapted to encourage greater social inclusion. The increasing focus on the generic curricula area of *life skills* is the expression of an essentially preventative and proactive perspective. At a minimal level, life skills include skills related to communication, decision-making, critical thinking,

empathy and coping with stress. They are skills that, when combined with specific information and knowledge, are transferable and generic, and that may be applied to a wide range of situations including health and general well-being (nutrition and hygiene, prevention of substance abuse, HIV/AIDS and other diseases, mine awareness and so forth), to non-violent co-existence (equality, respect for diversity, conflict management and resolution), as well as to employment (autonomy, flexibility, adaptability, mobility and creativity).

II. REGIONAL CONSULTATION

1. Purpose

The regional seminar on curricula development for social inclusion organized in Vilnius (5–8 December 2001) is part of a much wider process of regional consultations initiated by the International Bureau of Education in 1999 in view of documenting and promoting exchange and dialogue on national experiences of educational reform from the perspective of curriculum development. Previous workshops in New Delhi (March 1999), Buenos Aires (September 1999), Beijing (March 2000), Libreville (October 2000), Bangkok (December 2000), Muscat (February 2001), Havana (May 2001), Nairobi (June 2001) and Lagos (November 2001) have focused on a host of curriculum development issues ranging from capacity-building and the management of curricular change, to science education, teaching strategies, and 'learning to live together'. The regional workshop for Baltic and Scandinavian countries organized in Vilnius (December 2001) brought together curriculum specialists to focus on the issue of social inclusion.

2. Specific objectives

1. To share experiences in curricular reform that promote life skills for social inclusion.
2. To conduct exchanges on principles, approaches and methodologies that inform processes of curricular reform in life skills education.
3. To explore interest and possible mechanisms for further regional communication and co-operation.

3. Guiding questions

1. ***Defining social inclusion*:** What is meant by social inclusion in diverse socio-economic and political settings?
2. ***Patterns of social exclusion and challenges for education*:**
   What social groups are most affected by various forms of discrimination and social exclusion? What are the main factors of vulnerability that pose a threat to social cohesion in the Baltic Sea region and Scandinavia? What are the challenges posed to education systems by the phenomenon of social exclusion?
3. ***Educational responses*:** What are the various experiences of educational reform in general, and of reform of school curricular content in particular, in responding to these challenges? How are life skills contextualized and what place do they occupy in educational strategies to promote social inclusion? How do these appear in curricular frameworks and in various curricular areas?
4. ***Evaluation and research*:** What impact assessment and evaluation has been conducted on curricular reform in the area of life skills? What lessons have been learned?

4. Combination of working methods

The seminar adopted a combination of working methods, beginning with an initial keynote address providing a sociological overview of the historical role of formal education systems with regard to inequality and social cohesion. This was followed by national presentations from the following countries in the Baltic Sea region: Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Sweden. The presentations were organized around the four clusters of guiding questions relative to the definition of social inclusion, patterns of social exclusion, educational responses, and lessons learned form recent curricular innovations in view of promoting life skills and citizenship (see above). National presentations were then followed by two international case studies focused on: (1) curricula reforms in Latin America with a particular focus on the case of Argentina; and (2) the challenges of social inclusion in Northern Ireland: citizenship and life skills. Visits to youth, multinational, integrated special education and mixed-language schools in the Vilnius region enriched comparative and often theoretical analysis with a range of contextualized experiences aimed at promoting social inclusion in Lithuania. Working groups then revisited theoretical issues related to educational exclusion, before turning to more focused discussions on curricular innovations dealing with cultural diversity and citizenship, as well as with skills development and employment. Finally, voice was given to a select group of Lithuanian youth who debated the question of whether or not, in their view, Lithuanian schools adequately provide for the skills required for successful social integration. The same general issue was then discussed and debated by members of the Lithuanian National Education Forum with a focus on the following questions: (1) What skills and competencies are required as a result of social and economic changes that have taken place over the past decade? (2) Do Lithuanian schools adequately provide these skills and competencies?

III. GLOBAL TRANSFORMATIONS AND EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

1. Historical stability of schooling model

The seminar began by recalling the formidable historical stability of the institutional arrangements of learning that

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we have come to refer to as 'schooling' and of the notion of 'curricula' as the organizing principle of what to teach and how to teach it. The spectacular expansion of the schooling model is associated with the emergence of modern European nation-States that systemized the organization—and fundamentally modified the curricula—of the original model of religious schools. Despite recognition of the importance of a multiplicity of sites of learning in an inclusive learning society, and despite significant social changes in the course of history, schooling systems, despite often critical debate, have proven to be essential instruments of successful integration in large communities.

2. Globalization and the transformation of educational culture

The extraordinary expansion in access to education worldwide is therefore associated with the historical development of the nation-State model. However, there exists a more recent tension arising from the simultaneous globalization of the model of the nation-State, and that of expanding markets for which political frontiers are less relevant. In all contemporary societies, globalization—seen as multiple and interdependent processes of cultural, technological, economic and political change—is impacting on the ways in which individuals and groups define themselves. Participants discussed the ways in which these changes translate, for example, into attitudes of extreme individualism associated with the 'individualization of social norms' or the need to counter the 'growing cynicism' characteristic of 'Late Modernity'. Considerations of this type have led certain participants to wonder to what extent education for social inclusion is possible within a context of economic globalization. Coming to terms with this changing vision of ourselves and of social interaction implies changes in our educational culture. Yet, transforming our models of education and schooling to reflect changing educational culture and to ensure new modes of social cohesion is, as we all know, not an easy task.

3. Educational reform in contexts of rapid political and economic transition

This already difficult task of adapting school content, methods and structures to changes in educational culture in view of strengthening social cohesion is compounded by the consequences of radical political and economic transition. Challenges resulting from rapid economic and political transition in Lithuania, for instance, include responding to the observed increase in economically determined social divisions associated with the dissolution of the socialist model of the welfare state. The range of educational challenges includes attracting youth drop-outs and retaining them within more engaging youth schools that provide more personalized learning, or responding to the increase in the number of children in 'institutions for social care'. Indeed, the tensions inherent to the sudden radical juxtaposition of individualism and solidarity, competition and co-operation are common to societies in transition. Such socio-economic and ethical challenges add to the existing cultural sensitivities over the use of minority languages in schooling or the relative isolation of national minority schools common to some of the countries represented at the seminar, as well as to traditional challenges of integrated education as a response to individuals with special learning needs common to all.

4. Tension between the principle of equality of educational opportunity and social inequalities

The dramatic expansion of basic education across the world in the second half of the twentieth century has largely been inspired by the principle of the right to education, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. And yet, despite principles of the right to education for all and of equality of opportunity, inequality is an integral part of the schooling process. There appears then to be a tension between the principle of equality and the reality of economic and social inequalities that is only partly resolved through schooling. The schooling process cannot fully address the causes and determinants of social exclusion that lie elsewhere outside the school system. Nevertheless, a range of measures can be taken with regard to the school system to adopt norms, management styles, learning content and approaches that respond to the specific needs resulting from social determinants of exclusion. The translation of such measures to enhance social inclusion into effective practice is perhaps the central challenge, particularly within contexts of decentralized educational management systems. Moreover, there may be increasing cause for concern, as was suggested in the case of Sweden, about the inherent tension between the high cost of implementing certain educational measures for social inclusion and the principle of equity in the distribution of (limited) public resources for education.

5. Relative weight of curricula content in the development of life skills

In any discussion on curricular development and the promotion of life skills and core competencies, it is important to bear in mind the relative weight of official curricula with regard to the hidden—or not so hidden—unofficial curricula; i.e., the impact of the way in which teaching personnel interact with students, manage activities and life in their classrooms and within the school organization as a whole, and the nature and intensity of the relationship of the school with parents and wider community. It may therefore be argued that, from the perspective of social inclusion, shared values and norms internalized through the social experience of learning are at least as important as the learning of formal curricula

content. From the perspective of development of life skills or core/key competencies, or cross-curricular competencies, not only is it worth examining the way in which these are located and articulated in curricula arrangements, but it is also important to imagine the type of school organization that would favour the types of interactions and social practice that promote these core competencies.

6. Need for a paradigm shift

This, in part, is what was referred to as the necessary 'paradigm shift' by Ministers of Education at the recent International Conference of Education (Geneva, 5–8 September 2001): that is, a shift in focus towards learning, rather than teaching, and towards a competence-based—rather than subject-based—curricula that combines knowledge with the development of personal qualities and social skills. It is a paradigm that results from a vision of a 'learning society' focusing less on the acquisition of information and academic subject knowledge, and more on the competencies required to learn and continue learning throughout life. It is a shift from highly centralized time- and subject-bound curricula, to 'blocs' of content comprised of knowledge and competencies. These competencies or life skills range from sound basic literacy and numeracy skills initially acquired in the learners' mother tongue, to analytical, problem solving and critical thinking skills, to the personal qualities and social competencies required for social inclusion, co-operation and participation in social and economic life in a way that is respectful of the dignity of all. The paradigm shift also translates into a more practical orientation, as suggested in the move toward more functional knowledge and skills in current adaptation of curricula content in Latvia, for instance, or the introduction of cross-curricular educational paths in Poland. In addition to the traditional concern with content, the new paradigm attaches equal importance to the process of learning and to the need for partnerships in ensuring the arrangements required for effective learning and development of social competencies.

IV. ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Educational exclusion

The overarching issue of educational exclusion was first discussed in order to focus on the schooling process before examining the outcomes of formal education in terms of citizenship and 'employability'. The relevance of the theoretical model of schooling as a process of social reproduction was recalled in identifying the individual and familial sources or factors of initial inequality (e.g. nature and levels of parental educational attainment, family income level and social status, minority status, residence, gender) and the ways in which the schooling process impacts on these economic, cultural and social differences between pupils.

'*Labelling*' was therefore considered, not only from the viewpoint of the often unconscious and unintentional reinforcement of inequalities through the learning process and the interaction between learners and teachers, but also in terms of how the issues of educational exclusion are articulated. Social and economic determinants of cultural deprivation are often clouded by a focus on the disadvantaged populations that are most affected by them, whether these be poorer households and communities, immigrant or national minorities.

School culture—that is, the way everyday life at school is organized, the everyday experience of schooling within and beyond the classroom—was deemed essential in determining the degree to which schooling may enhance social inclusion. The *involvement of the family* and wider community within the schooling process is considered to be an essential principle of effective integration. This involvement, however, often remains weak due to a variety of reasons, such as the increasingly multicultural nature of Danish, Norwegian and Swedish societies as a result of significant patterns of immigration over the last few decades. In the case of some of the Scandinavian countries, the issue of family involvement is framed in terms of the need to 're-mobilize' parents and involve them within a wider public debate on education supported in part by the media. In complementing the early socialization that takes place within the home, *pre-school education*, as suggested by the Swedish experience, is invaluable in promoting a more equitable development of social skills among pupils form diverse socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

2. Citizenship education

Ensuring social inclusion in contexts of *cultural diversity* requires a willingness to participate in pluralistic political structures based on principles of justice and equitable distribution of material and symbolic resources. In terms of education, the acquisition of languages other than the mother-tongue, the use of minority languages for instruction, and education for multiculturalism, are essential ingredients for effective social inclusion in situations of cultural diversity.

There are important differences in the *philosophical approaches* that inform the goal of citizenship education. Civic education may, for instance, be seen as a means of ensuring continuity and stability through the inculcation of principles of obedience and compliance to existing social orders. On the other hand, in cases of rapid political transition, civic education may be framed within a more progressive forward-looking vision accompanying processes of social and political change.

In addition to the various social, civic and political components of citizenship education, it has been recalled that the *concept is culturally and context specific*. Indeed, identifying and defining the 'shared values' implicit to citizenship education is not an easy task. Is there indeed

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a common denominator of values that are shared among individuals and groups in increasingly individualized, multicultural and global societies? Reference to internationally recognized norms, as expressed, for instance, in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, is a promising avenue for moving towards defining a set of such 'shared values'.

Moreover, what is the *process of reaching consensus on content* of citizenship in terms of values? The experience of the progressive integration into curricula policy and design of the grassroots social, political and civic education pilot project in Northern Ireland is indeed an inspiring example. Likewise, the Norwegian experience of combined bottom-up and top-down broad-based development of the 'Christian and religious knowledge and life philosophy' curriculum is a rich illustration of the complexity of the process of reaching consensus on the development of curricula in sensitive and potentially contentious subject areas.

Discussion of *methodological issues* are central to the area of citizenship and are directly related to the issues of the relative weight of schooling with regard to other socializing influences of the family, the street, the media, religious organizations, and so forth. Indeed, even in the absence of explicit concern for the development of social skills and competencies associated with citizenship in curricula frameworks or in syllabi, teachers act as models for the development of social skills. Their behaviour, their teaching style, the language used and the way in which they interact with learners may or may not convey essential principles related to fairness and responsibility. Active and participative methodologies, co-operative learning, project work, like the organization of school life, are all essential components for the development for skills related to citizenship education. The use of videos is also extremely useful in bringing into the classroom voices not normally heard within the school or community. Other skills are processing information in the media, including learning to judge the quality of sources of information on the Internet, for example. In socially tense or politically divided societies, it is important to recall the potential risk involved in raising contentious issues in the classroom and the necessary management and moderating skills required on the part of the teacher. Finally, education for participation can only effectively take place through real participation and experiential learning.

3. Skills development for employment

It is important to be aware of the *ideological underpinnings* of such terms as 'employability' that often suggest that unemployment is the result of an individual failure to integrate into the labour market, and exonerates any macro political and economic considerations.

Identifying skills required for employment: Bearing in mind this note of caution, the fundamental question is that of the proper definition and identification of the skills and competencies required for employment. Commonly accepted skills frameworks often include personal, interpersonal, physical, learning skills, as well as those related to the use of new information and communication technologies. Life skills may therefore be conceived as being for personal development, citizenship and for employment. Social skills were seen as being the essential focus and that the skills associated with 'employability' are encapsulated within this wider concept. The importance of clear definitions of the content of social skills was illustrated with the distinction between 'the ability to cope with change' (regardless of the nature of the direction of change) and the development of 'a *critical* attitude to change' (refuting the often implicit assumption that all change is positive).

Sources of diagnostic: The diagnostic of a shortage of social skills is based on a combination of beliefs, widely approved policy documents such as the European Commission's Memorandum on Life-Long Learning, or labour market surveys. The survey recently conducted by the National Observatory of Lithuania, as part of the wider Management of Human Resources in Private Entreprises study commissioned by the European Training Foundation (2001), is an excellent example of the role of research in attempting to identify the most important occupational skills and competencies currently required and in short supply within a rapidly growing private sector.

Monitoring and evaluation: If these skills and competencies can indeed be properly identified, how can learning processes be monitored to ensure that they are indeed being developed? Lithuania offered an interesting example of the identification of twelve minimal criteria used to define what constitutes an effective adult educator. How are these skills located in curricula arrangements? Which subject areas lend themselves particularly well for the development of which skills? Which among the skills should be emphasized across subject areas?

Outcomes: On a more aggregate level, can the development of life skills through formal education be linked to effective employment and enhanced labour productivity? Regardless of the possibility with which such transfer can be measured, it appears crucial that vocational education, professional guidance and the promotion of skills to find jobs be an integral part of school-based learning.

4. Assessment and methods of evaluation

Rationales for assessment: It is important from the outset to state that assessment is important to promote learning, as well as to acknowledge achievement. The goals and nature of assessment of the learning process may be negotiated between teachers and pupils.

The experience of a *combination of innovative modes of assessment* of student achievement, including self-

assessment, peer assessment, co-operative evaluation and project work, as described in Denmark and Norway, for instance, appear to be promising avenues to the development of life skills and key competencies.

Self-assessment and portfolio assessment may be more suited for the development of self-esteem and self-motivation, essential ingredients of employability. Self-assessment need not only be on the level of the individual learner, but may also be applied to the level of school organization or to the level of the education system. It was suggested that self-assessment at these various levels is a positive means of accepting complex systems. Yet, the question remains as to how national assessment standards with regard to life skills may be articulated in a context of decentralized school-based curricula.

In the case of citizenship, it appears important to clarify what exactly should be assessed and how this may be done. Is it an assessment at the cognitive level of the acquisition of knowledge, or at the psycho-social level of attitudes and perceptions, or at the behavioural level in terms of participation? How does one assess experiential learning? The *joint certification of action-based community projects* by educational authorities and a civil society partner is a promising example of creative and meaningful assessment that fosters the development of citizenship skills.

5. Pre and in-service training

What skills and competencies do teachers require to organize learning processes in such a way as to promote the development of life skills for civic, social, economic and political participation? Regardless of whether skills can indeed be monitored and measured, or whether they are contained in syllabi, it appears important that a vision be explicitly mentioned in the aims, standards and curricula frameworks.

As a result, this vision must inform, inspire and be implemented within pre-service and in-service teacher training curricula. Training for citizenship education, for instance, in sensitive contexts of social and even political division, produces new training needs to prepare teachers for their new role. Indeed, how does one develop the subtle competencies required by teachers to be more than neutral facilitators, while maintaining and encouraging an inquisitive and open exploration of the ethical issues that are at the heart of citizenship education?

Finally, it would appear important that student counselling and professional orientation be part of teacher training in view of promoting the skills required for students to make proper career choices and better prepare them for integration in the labour market. The need for teacher training to emphasize skills and competencies required to search for, create, and maintain employment is all the more important given the increasing difficulty of forecasting the evolution of the labour market.

Although there may be a weak research base to support the idea of a significant impact of the learning of life skills in enhancing social inclusion, research can make an enriching contribution to the design of teacher-training programmes. One interesting contribution might be the outcomes of research conducted among children and youth to document their perceptions of the relevance of subject content and methods of learning. Another would be the sensitization of teachers to the dangers of labelling when conceiving and dealing with issues of social, economic and cultural differences amongst students and their home communities, based on a documented understanding of the construction and transmission of stereotypes and prejudice. Finally, research may also contribute by documenting school-based and teacher-based experiences in combining innovative approaches to assessment of learning and achievement.

* * *

In addition to strengthening regional exchange and dialogue on curricula reform for the development of life skills and the promotion of social inclusion, there appear to be a number of issues and experiences that would warrant further exploration. These issues may be related to the processes and content of curriculum reform and of learning processes, and the role that assessment and research may play at each level. They may also be related to the creative modalities for the assessment of life skills and the implications such innovations would have for teacher training. Other issues may include a closer examination of the promises and limits of broad based consultative processes of curricular design, particularly in normative areas of learning content. Yet other questions may include the implementation of educational reform in extremely decentralized management contexts and the potential clash between the costs of inclusive education and the principle of equity.

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HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Education systems, social integration and inequality

Walo Hutmacher

The fundamental issue of integration or of social cohesion is that of the social bond, in the sense in which Montesquieu already conceived it when he defined society, not as the sum of individuals, but as the union between them. When referring to more specifically education, the issue is in fact that of the social production of the bond; i.e. what constitutes the union and what holds people and societies together more of less peacefully, despite tensions and conflict between individuals and groups sharing widely unequal resources.

With this in mind, it may be useful to take a rather broad view and to attempt to sketch the social and institutional context, the landscape in which curricula are defined, and in which social integration is a constant challenge. Instead of building up a system of unfamiliar concepts, it might be useful to apply them practically to a reading of the history of schooling as a major integrative feature of Western society. By illustrating the possible usefulness of these concepts, it is important to recall how much our present owes to a historical heritage that we are not always aware of.

I. GLOBALIZATION OF THE NATIONAL STATE MODEL AND OF THE SCHOOL

Let us begin, however, by examining the present. What will probably characterize the second half of the twentieth century in future historical recollection is the extension to the entire planet of a form of organization and government of human society that gradually emerged and developed in Europe over the last 600 years (Elias, 1976). In the course of decolonization, the world has in fact been entirely divided up and structured into territory-based national societies. Each of these societies is governed by a sovereign State, which, within the boundaries of its territory, not only has the right to raise taxes and print money, but also detains the monopoly of legitimate physical violence, i.e. the exclusive right to raise an army, maintain a police force and dispense criminal justice.

This overall model of public authority takes widely differing forms. In many cases, the precise geographical areas and populations over which sovereignty is exercised remain uncertain and in dispute. The State's organization is not fully accomplished everywhere. It also varies greatly between more centralised and more federalist structures. Nor can all countries be called democratic either. National societies are very unequal in terms of wealth, power and level of social and economic development, and their governments enjoy widely unequal levels of resources. But all these differences do not alter the basic premise that the nation-State has become the dominant form of organization of society throughout the species.

The global spread of the national State model has raised a number of new frontiers and identities. And in everyday parlance as well as in political discourse the very concept of society is primarily associated with and circumscribed by national society. Everywhere people define society primarily as their national society, where they live and to which they feel a sense of belonging. They perceive other national societies as being different in many ways and possibly even as threatening.

Yet, as this form of organization becomes universal, it is being rocked by the globalization of economic markets (goods, services, capital and labour), which has accelerated over the last fifteen years, under the impetus of new information and communication technologies abolishing time and distance on a world scale. Markets no longer know any frontiers: They are global, while political action and democracy remain enclosed within national borders. The two main pillars of the so-called free society--that is, a free market and democracy—thus do not share the same contours.

Obviously, there would be much to say about the tensions, risks and opportunities that are related to this new situation, where the relevant spaces and horizons of politics and economy no longer coincide. This is particularly true of education and training systems. It must be underlined that, in many countries, the development towards global markets (including the information and communication media) represents a major challenge to the very credibility of national State policy and democracy in the eyes of the citizens.

But the main purpose of this short introduction is simply to draw our attention to this global context and to introduce another dimension of the modern State. One of the very important and equally universal aspects of national States since the end of the nineteenth century lies indeed in the fact that, over and above their monopoly on physical violence, their authorities also enjoy significant prerogatives in the realm of what Bourdieu and Passeron (1970) have

called *symbolic violence*. This somewhat unusual concept defines the power that some enjoy legitimately to influence and guide individuals' lives by imposing meanings, knowledge, beliefs, competencies and life skills, and/or by defining the relevant reference values and standards. In modern societies, this power very much lies in the State authorities' control over education systems. The existence of school systems is an integral part of the dominant form of organization, and they do operate as the major (although not entirely monopolistic) institution for defining, authorising, guiding, assessing and certifying knowledge, beliefs and skills taught to and learned by the new generations.

The last half century thus appears not only as that of globalization of the nation-State model, but also as the era of globalization of the model of State-controlled education systems and schools. Westerners take this institution very much for granted. Their own socialization makes it familiar to them and they typically tend to consider its universal diffusion as a rather positive development. They can hardly think of it as an invasion of the world's societies by Western civilization or even conceive or recognize that, like most social developments, it also has a negative side. Re-reading authors such as Cheikh Hamidou Kane (1961), however, helps us to recognize the ambiguities and tensions that accompany the introduction of schools into, for example, societies with a mainly oral tradition. These societies are caught between the temptations of (Western and foreign) 'civilization' and their love for the traditional knowledge and wisdom inherited from ancestors, which they revere. 'If I tell them to go to school,' exclaims the chief of the Diallobé people in Mali, 'they will go en masse. But in learning they will also forget. Is what they learn worth what they will forget?'

It is current experience in international meetings that participants would many times recognize how much the different countries represented have in common, despite their cultural, social and institutional differences. Comparing education policies also discloses a number of commonalities among countries, despite their many differences. Why is this so? Two concurrent aspects may account for it. On one side, countries, their societies, their governments and their education systems face similar problems because, in the context of globalization, they must face similar challenges in the present and also with regard to the future. Even in the most industrialized and rich countries, for instance, governments are increasingly aware that they are caught in the global but unequal configuration. There they compete among themselves and with other countries and world regions for production sites and workplaces that will help maintain the high-level incomes and the affluent life styles that their workforce and their citizens have become used to since the end of the Second World War. Political and economic competition is a major challenge for all countries, and competitiveness—the capacity to compete—increasingly involves education because it increasingly depends on the knowledge and competencies available in the workforce, and integration in the workforce is becoming more and more important for social integration in general.

II. THE COMMON INSTITUTIONAL HERITAGE

There is, however, a second reason that explains at least the commonality of problems and the convergence of educational policies. It stems from the fact that countries share schooling as a common institutional heritage, both as a solution and as a problem.

We tend to take schooling so much for granted that we even forget it has a long history. A historical approach would shed some light on this heritage, particularly when viewed from the perspective of the link between schooling, education and social integration. When thinking of the present and the future, it is sometimes useful to better understand where we come from. As our understanding of education becomes more differentiated through practice, reflection, the definition and resolution of problems, as well as through research, we are also able to look back with new eyes. Looking back, we might discover that what we thought was new or recent actually goes back a long time. Many features of present education structures, culture, organization and practice are part of a heritage that we overlook and/or that often operates implicitly, in the form of tacit knowledge.

Schooling has a very long history. The institutional form now known as schooling goes back to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when John Calvin established the rules and the order of the 'college' in the Protestant Republic of Geneva in 1559. Ignatius of Loyola laid the foundations of the Jesuit colleges, which were consolidated in 1595 in the well-known *Ratio Studiorum*, after a long process of experimentation and consultation, particularly in what is now modern-day Spain, Italy, France and Germany. Calvin and Loyola borrowed much from the principles and rules that the 'Brothers of Christian Life' had elaborated in their schools during the first half of the sixteenth century. Obviously, the question of how to educate children and young people was topical in that era of religious divide.

In fact, four major institutional options were adopted during that period—the very dawn of modern times—which made them successful and have had lasting consequences:

1. The first was to educate and socialize children and young people collectively, submitting them from an early age and for many years to the shared experience of a common discipline. The explicit aim was to produce a culturally homogenous and socially integrated religious and political elite—an elite that, at that time, was predominantly male, urban and bourgeois.
2. The second, complementary option was to remove education and training of children and young persons not only from uncontrolled individual or private teachers or preceptors, but also, at least partly, from the grasp of the family (particularly its women). The very creation of schools creates a division of educational work and educational authority between school and family.

3. The third option was to subject teachers and their teaching to a superior educational authority that was established outside and above the individual school (political theocracy or religious authority). The purpose of this authority was to select, appoint, and, where appropriate, pay the teachers, for whom teaching was to be the sole activity. In the name of a common good, this authority was also solely empowered to decide what would be legitimately taught in schools, how it would be taught and which teachers were individually assigned to teach specific subject matter to specific groups of students, as defined by grades.
4. The fourth option was the systematic and standardized organization of work within these institutions, the main features of which are:
   - a clearly delineated internal hierarchy of roles and places within the school: principal, headteacher, teachers, auxiliary staff, and students at the lowest level;
   - strict spatial demarcations: the school is a closed space, separated from the everyday life of adults and is sub-divided into cells linked via corridors;
   - an equally strict division of time: the predetermined and standard length of schooling, subdivided into annual cycles, themselves subdivided into periods and lessons of a determined and standard length ruled by the clock;
   - the grouping of students, allocation of students to teachers and of teachers to students obeying impersonal criteria, notwithstanding the preferences and wishes of teachers and students;
   - regular formal assessment of students' work and progress through impersonal procedures;
   - a prescribed teaching practice, very much copied from the model of religious predication in the churches: the teacher teaches, students listen and learn what is proclaimed to be the 'true' knowledge and the 'right' set of doctrines and beliefs emanating from the chair. The medieval scholastic method had been based on a triadic model (*lectio, quaestio, disputatio*, see Le Goff, 1984). In the newly founded institution, only *lectio* remained, *quaestio* and *disputatio* having disappeared from the school's horizon.
   - Finally, students were subjected to constant surveillance, thereby losing all freedom of movement and all control over the use of their time.

One may easily recognize some of the basic premises on which many or most schools still operate today, and one is incidentally inclined to admire the great longevity of this 'social technology'. Why was the schooling model adopted? What problems did the dominant social forces and the political or religious leaders of those times intend to solve by this option? Some of the answers may be found in an address by Jean Bodin to the Senate and People of Toulouse about the education to be given to young people in a republic in 1559 (cited in Petitat, 1982). Bodin clearly advocates education in the college, a form of schooling that was then attended by children from the age of learning initial literacy skills up to entrance into an academy or university.

Bodin starts with a strong criticism of the preceptorate, which was current practice among the noble and the wealthy urban bourgeois families. He stigmatizes the 'procession of preceptors'—most of whom were students—acquitting their duties badly, using variable syllabuses and methods, and finishing up by 'sowing more confusion than intelligence in the young minds'. He then argues that individual education lacks the incentive of emulation, prevents the exercise of rhetoric and does not properly prepare those who will be called to express themselves in public. More importantly, education at home leaves too much control in the hands of families, particularly of the women, 'too readily inclined towards excessive indulgence'. In contrast to 'the luxury and softness, the deceit and impiety' that reigned in families, Bodin expects the college to offer a 'sober and firm education, through regular and properly ruled work'. In the minds of the religious and political leaders of those times (and of many of their successors), the institution of the school was thus clearly directed against the use that many families made of their educational authority.

Bodin's major argument, however, is of a political nature: the diversity of young people's education threatens the unity of the community and its religious homogeneity. 'Why,' he asks, 'are there so many parties opposing each other, and cannot achieve agreement among themselves, if it is not because everyone makes it a point of honour to follow his own sect and its master?' In his opinion, even in a secular State, 'the children should receive the common education necessary for the city's well-being, so that all citizens feel bound to one another and to the State by a sort of natural bond.'

We should also remember that, at that time, Gutenberg's invention started having a major impact on society, greatly facilitating the circulation of books containing orthodox as well as 'heretical' knowledge and beliefs. This adds to the reasons why the social and political forces expressed by Bodin saw what we would today call 'cultural homogenization' as a major stake in education and a strong argument for schooling. Furthermore, schooling, in their view, was already the major instrument to foster the social cement resulting from early friendships grounded in the long-lasting shared experience of a common discipline.

III. CULTURAL INTEGRATION OF ELITES AND SOCIAL DISTINCTION

No doubt, this fundamental working hypothesis lies at the heart of both Loyola's and Calvin's scholarly institutions, and explains their success. However, in the Europe of that turbulent sixteenth century, the development of the school is also part of another major trend of modernity, which also transcends religious divides. It touches the basic principles that govern the allocation of places, positions and destinies over and within generations.

An economically powerful and intellectually and politically influential fraction of the urban bourgeoisie endured the feudal order with some difficulty, since access to social excellence, privileges, social status, prestige, recognition and authority were basically determined by birth. Erasmus of Rotterdam, for example, expressed this resentment in 1530 in the introduction to his work *On puerile civility,* where he explicitly claimed for an equivalence between nobility of intelligence and nobility of birth. 'All those,' he argues, 'who cultivate their mind through the humanities should be deemed noble' (Ariès, 1977).

Alongside religious instruction, the classical humanities, as they later came to be called, were indeed to form the basis of the curriculum in the Jesuit as well as the protestant colleges. And, besides the impetus of religious orders or authorities, until the end of the eighteenth century the rapid spread of colleges or similar schools throughout the major European cities mainly depended on the material support and political goodwill of a wealthy urban bourgeoisie. Noble persons and kings showed little and rather sporadic interest in the development of schools. Colleges were mostly supported by bourgeois families, who also entrusted their children to them, in order that they would learn that distinctive culture, which in Erasmus' claim deserved equivalence with nobility of birth, i.e. the culture of the classical humanities.

The caste system of the feudal order was to be abolished much later, in France, through a bloody revolution. But in the meantime, college attendance and the culture of the humanities contributed to cement the urban bourgeoisie, or at least its male half, in all emerging territorial feudal States, catholic or protestant.

Along with other factors, the college has also established the social distinction, respectability and authority for the wealthy and influential bourgeois and patricians—the *popolo grasso*—vis-à-vis the craftsmen, labourers and peasants, the modest people in the cities and the countryside. In the eyes of this *popolo minuto,* the opportunity for a better life for the children, access to dignity, recognition and good social positions through personal effort and merit also gained desirability. And this precisely defines the school as an integral part of the long process towards a class-based society, where social position is no longer defined primarily by birth, but by achievement.

The purpose of this brief historical excursion was to highlight the fact that since the start social cohesion in a plural and unequal society lies at the very heart of schools in modern society. They are intended to meet the challenge for cultural homogeneity of growing and diverse multitudes of increasingly independent individuals in expanding territories, and they participate in the justification of inequalities of socio-economic condition, positions, trajectories and destinies in a class-based society. I will come back to this second aspect.

For one part, the schools' impact on cultural homogenization and integration certainly results from the common prescribed curriculum. Since the same syllabuses and subjects are being taught to and learned by students from a range of families and cultural horizons, they will share a common culture in the broad anthropological sense: common knowledge, beliefs, values, references and standards of excellence. However, without underestimating the effects of this instructional aspect, attention must be drawn to Jean Bodin's hypothesis of work, based on the impact of the students' collective, shared organized life experience under the schools' 'civilizing' law and their teachers' surveillance and authority.

What was called the 'new sociology of education' in the United Kingdom (Young, 1971) has underlined this second aspect back in the 1970s, subsuming it under the notion of the *hidden curriculum* of the school. There is, in fact, nothing really hidden about it. On the contrary, nowadays more than ever, everybody knows it because everybody knows what life and experience in school look like. But everybody takes it as self-evident. Rather than hidden, these aspects of students' experience are simply ignored due to the blindness that results from familiarity; no notice is taken of them. They are not part of any formal curriculum either, for the same reason; but even more so because they are embedded in and result from the practical, osmotic and gradual learning experiences in the specific organization of time and space, configuration of roles and places that make up the social fabric of the scholarly institution.

In other words, they result from all the very real learning of students that results from the simple fact of going to school everyday over many years, being engaged in a dependent role within a formal hierarchical structure, submitting to the rules of organized instruction and learning, accepting the time and space constraints, sitting still and listening to lessons, 'zapping' from one subject to another several times a day, restraining one's emotions, making one's own behaviour conform in relationships with teachers and peers, getting acquainted with the rules of the scholarly game and with the meritocratic equity principles that drive it, etc.

Human beings cannot fail to learn through experience. Therefore, students will learn a lot through their interactions in this environment, depending on their prior dispositions, their aspirations, expectations and projects in life, also on their cultural resources and those of their families. Ultimately, they will also interpret what happens to them in the course of their experience and construct their own meaning of schooling and learning. Some may easily endorse the rules of the game and comply in a more or less conformist or flexible way. Others may, more less openly, resist them, either playing with the rules (e.g. learning only to achieve grades) or entering into open conflict with them.

Moreover, all of these experiences and reactions occur in the company of peers of the same age, who share the same environment and the same constraints, the same discipline and experience. Peers also form the everyday audience for each and for the way he/she copes with the situation. And for many, this audience—or parts of it—may actually become more important than the teacher(s)

and the formal hierarchy of the school. Any institutional configuration of roles and places constitutes a configuration of opportunities at the same time, where actors occupying the roles and places will try to pursue their own interests as they define them, notwithstanding the formal definition of the institution's formal goals.

Formal curricula are intended to define the content that teachers will teach and to guide their pedagogical practice. In schools, curricula are typically organized by subjects or disciplines, which has a major structuring effect on the whole mind frame of the school and, as such, also constitutes a major (implicit) learning effect on students. They learn that in the world they enter knowledge is organized by subjects or disciplines, and what kind of knowledge belongs to which subject. On a more general level, they ultimately learn that learning takes place in the way that it is done in schools, because in their life experience the very concept of learning is so strongly attached to the school and to what happens there.

It is notorious, however, that curricula are overloaded in all subjects: there is always more material to be taught than student time available. This is only one of the many situations where teachers also play with the rules, more or less openly and with more or less guilty feelings towards the authorities, students or parents. There is a varying distance between the formal curriculum and the curriculum that is actually taught to students. It may be useful here to draw attention to the fact that teachers also construct their own meaning of their activity and experience in the complex configuration of expectations that in their perception are addressed to them by their hierarchy, their colleagues, their students, the parents of their students and so many others. Just like their students, they experience many tensions between their own interests and projects and the institutional roles, places and goals. It might be important to articulate the experience of teachers to that of students, but this is another topic (see Dubet & Martucelli, 1996).

From the point of view of results and of the consequences of schooling on social integration, what really matters is what Perrenoud (1984) calls the *real curriculum*. This is not what has been prescribed to teach or what is taught, but what students actually learn in school and, from this point of view, it will be clear by now that there is a great deal of curriculum in the students' everyday experience in school over many years. A large portion of this learning does not derive from the formal subject-related curricula, but from the organizational framework of the school.

Interestingly, it is only recently that the experience and the experiential learning of students have been deemed worthy of interest, consideration and some systematic study. Cléopatre Montandon (1997), for instance, has studied the way primary school students feel about the education they receive, and found them 'a little hurt in their heart'. Interacting with students of French *lycées* (for 16–19 year-olds), François Dubet (1991) has shown a significant gap between what they are supposed to experience from the institutional discourse and what they actually feel. They massively report feelings of excessive dependence and control on one side, and boredom during the lessons on the other. Many cannot see the relevance of what they are being taught, nor the way they are treated. In many such schools, a significant portion of students expressed the feeling of being despised by their teachers. Whatever the 'truth' of what they express—whether teachers really do despise students or not—the students' perception constitutes a reality in itself, because what humans define as real is real in its consequences.

It may be, however, that the very emergence of recent interest in the experience of students in research and in pedagogical reflection signals a change in schools' educational culture and their image of children and youth, as does in another register the recent switch from knowledge-oriented to competence-oriented schooling.

IV. A PROMETHEAN ANTHROPOLOGY

Schools' organizational arrangements clearly appear to owe much to the monastic orders and abbeys, which, from the seventh century A.D. on, had been very successful in holding together large numbers of men or women, sustainably and more or less peacefully. The school combines this heritage with a political project and with a typically Promethean concept of human beings. A new image of childhood which emerged towards the end of the Middle Ages (Ariès, 1973) and represents a major turn towards the development of an anthropology of educability.

This is a dual view of human nature, rooted in a moralistic current of thought, which emerged in ecclesiastic circles in the first half of the fifteenth century. From a rather pessimistic viewpoint, children were defined as invalid, ill-natured, sinful, ignorant, depraved and incapable of achieving goodness by themselves. But on the other hand, they could be shaped, tamed, disciplined and improved, if properly guided, controlled and educated. In this view of childhood, adults—in particular parents, spiritual guides and teachers—were attributed an increased moral and religious responsibility to educate and discipline children—even to 'beat them straight'—in order to lead them to eternal salvation, a key concern in that profoundly religious world.

This definition of mankind and childhood gradually gained credibility and social strength in ecclesiastic as well as in dominant urban circles. It became a central argument in favour of increased control over children and youth, i.e. of explicit and direct educational, disciplining action by adults on children. The religious beliefs that underlie it formed the main foundation of legitimacy in the process of adoption of the scholarly institution.

The institutionalization process of the school has indeed undergone a very long process of what retrospectively appears like experimentation—trial and error. Even when the organizational model was instituted, in the sixteenth century, students were not disciplined at once just because they were sent to schools. Many parents resisted the sharing of educational power and authority with the school. There

has always existed a considerable gap between reality and the ideal of the school. Complaints about the schools' inadequacies and defects, teachers' shortcomings and pupils' lack of knowledge, morality and discipline are a perennial phenomenon (Thévenaz, 1896). Since Herodotes and Plato at least, we know that older generations are hard to satisfy as far as the education of the younger ones is concerned. This appears as a kind of structural constant in human societies. Therefore, it might not be unreasonable to consider debate about schools as a basic component of the institutional model itself (Hutmacher, 1999). However, equally remarkably, despite all the criticisms, incidents, students' indiscipline or riots, difficulties and crises, at no time in the long history of the school have the dominant social forces or the religious or political authorities challenged it as such, and the urban bourgeois elites have never deserted it.

Indeed, at the initiative of religious and political communities and with the support of bourgeois capital, the model was widely replicated, being adopted in most major cities. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it was adapted to educate the children of popular classes, earlier in Protestant than in Catholic regions, thus slowly becoming part of established practice and aspirations of the common people as well. By the end of the eighteenth century, 250 years after its institution, the school was neither a universal nor a unified phenomenon, but the overall model was accepted, forming part of a familiar cultural background, its basic structure being taken for granted and offering a response to widely shared aspirations. Attendance was desirable for a majority and literacy had made significant progress in Catholic areas too and among the common people in cities and in villages (Furet & Ozouf, 1977).

This is not the place for a more in-depth presentation and analysis of the social complexities of this creative historical process, nor of what this option excluded or destroyed. But it may be useful to draw attention to the precursory role the school model has played in what Michel Foucault (1975) has so brilliantly described and analysed as the emergence of a new 'power economy and technology' for the management of multitudes. Indeed, the same fundamental anthropology and similar systematic, rationalized and formalized institutional rules and practices developed their influence during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in army barracks, hospitals, prisons and industrial manufactures. All these *people processing organizations* fundamentally emphasize human plasticity, and in particular educability. They have continually refined their methods of operation as well as the time/space arrangements and the disciplines of body and mind, up to the present day. They have also developed those rigorous documentary techniques that were to provide the first bases for the systematic observation that in turn were subsequently to become—as a logical progression—the medical and the human sciences.

V. FROM RELIGIOUS GOVERNMENT TO THE EDUCATIONAL STATE

The school as an institution was thus not invented by the modern democratic State. But, with varying national arrangements between church and State, it moved from religious to political justification and control in the course of the nineteenth century. The constitutions of all modern and democratic States guarantee freedom of education, but in practical terms the State represents the major educational authority, not only regulating education but also providing it as a service. This is the time when the State's monopoly on physical violence was reinforced by a high degree of control over the power of symbolic violence. To ensure universal access and reinforce the State's grip—if not monopoly—on education, schools became public and—at least at primary level—free of charge.

In response to resistance from a small portion of families, every country eventually made schooling compulsory for all children, at least for a few years. This paradoxical option—obliging everyone to acquire the instruments of freedom and emancipation—may well have been a political ruse. The major reason for compulsory education may well have been to establish the State's right and duty to supervise the education provided in the still extant private and often religious schools, which, according to the principle of freedom of education, continued to profess their own values.

Democracy played a dual role in the institution of the State's authority. On one side, it was argued, universal suffrage presupposes universal instruction and literacy. On the other side, the democratic process legitimized the political options about goals, content, structures, rules and methods of now public educational institutions. Last, but not least, the economic development resulting from industrialization provided the necessary resources to establish, expand and maintain schools.

The social forces, which dominated the political scene and the State during that period, however, took over the organizational model that had been developed by the churches, without significant changes. But all existing schools were integrated into a system with successive levels and curricula: primary, secondary and higher education. It also consolidated the bureaucratic regulation within those systems (bureaucracy is the little sister of democracy!). What changed radically were the contents and the ideological orientation of instruction. Religious education did not disappear from public schools in all countries however. The secularization of education was mainly reflected in the growing emphasis on a materialist approach to the world, on science as the new dominant mode of knowledge and as a source of hope for progress. The new ideological stance also insisted on the value of work, achievement and rationality on one hand, and citizenship, solidarity, national loyalty and democracy on the other. In every country the school indeed became the forging ground for a new gospel of national identity.

For the sake of national integration, education systems adopted, promoted and imposed a politically correct

standard language within a very pluralistic linguistic landscape and contributed to attach language to territory. A patriotic catechism was designed to develop national identity and loyalty, to foster the deeply entrenched and shared feeling of belonging to the same country, of 'being in the same boat'. In many cases, they did this by raising the distinctive characteristics of countries' culture to an almost religious status of national identity, often to the detriment of other national identities. No doubt, with a strong accent on more-or-less coercive assimilation of the minorities to the dominant culture, schools and education systems have played a major role in the process of cultural transformation as well as homogenization of what were initially highly plural and culturally diverse societies. From an international perspective, however, since State schools fulfilled this task in every country, they succeeded in supporting a process of cultural, identity-based, often conflictive and sometimes aggressive differentiation between national societies.

With their major contribution to the 'production' of men and women, State-controlled education systems have become and still are one of modern national societies' predominant tools of government. Their very history first coincides with, then forms part of the critical integration process of increasingly large-scale national societies, the majority of whose members, notwithstanding the variety of social positions and cultural and ethnic origins, and despite differing ideologies—divisions between city and countryside, male and female, and between social classes—consider and recognize themselves as citizens of the same entity in which they identify as 'we', as distinct from other such entities—'them'—located beyond the national borders.

As they became more universally attended, school systems did not lose their role in the process of social distinction and the allocation of unequally desirable social roles, places, life horizons and destinies. Through universal attendance, schools actually incorporated the major interest and cultural cleavages associated with the new major class divide. At least up to the middle of the twentieth century, this was primarily to place a minority capitalist bourgeoisie in control of political and economic power, in opposition to a proletarian majority challenging that control. Universal access to education did not mean, in fact, that everybody was going to be educated to the highest possible levels, but rather who should and who should not? And how were both to be selected legitimately?

In Europe, since the middle of the nineteenth century, the dominant social forces succeeded in transposing the social cleavages into the structures of education systems by splitting them internally. Baudelot and Establet (1971) have analysed this development for France but, in differing forms, it can be traced in all European countries. The education system is defined according to the metaphor of a railway system with two more or less parallel tracks for students' trajectories, clearly delineated and highly graded in terms of social status, distinction and destiny:

1. The first track, through a selective gymnasial/grammar/upper secondary education was to lead to university and higher education, considered as the major conservatories and depositories of the standard-setting 'cultivated reference culture' (Bourdieu, 1979), grounded in the classical humanities, with Latin and Greek as the key subjects in the curriculum. Although (or because) these humanities did not have any direct economic utility, they remained part of the standard of social excellence, supporting social distinction. Destined and restricted to a privileged minority, this track opened the royal pathway to the most prestigious occupations, social positions and destinies.
2. The second track initially ended after primary education, but was later extended to lower and eventually higher secondary vocational. It had a much more utilitarian orientation, preparing for work in dependent positions in factories or offices (Magnin & Marcacci, 1990). Attended by the large majority, this track led to more modest occupations, social positions and destinies.

The integrated education system respected the principle of 'the same school for all', and the separate tracks allowed for the reproduction of the overall inequality structure. Each social class grounded part of its identity in its own track. Bourgeois families strongly identified with the higher track and its culture, but the lower classes adopted the lower track just as well as their own, even though, as Marx had noted in 1864, the interests of the dominant bourgeoisie also governed it.

The two networks were not entirely watertight to each other. Mobility was possible. Upward moves did not occur on a massive scale but, for each generation, some of the most gifted members of the lower classes did succeed in accessing the higher track. And every individual achieving such upward mobility provided a spur for a thousand more. Social mobility is at the heart of a class-divided society and a key factor for pacification and integration of modern societies, be it as a reality, a hope, an illusion or a chimera. It also contributes to growing educational aspirations among the mass of ordinary people, reinforcing the credibility of the State schools' education, and the growing desirability of the social and economic benefits to which they promise access, even if—perhaps even because—the rules of the game are largely determined by the interests of dominant groups and classes.

In such a configuration, the legitimate selection of those who do obtain access to the more prestigious schools and the structural arrangements that regulate the upward flow of students are a predominant and constant stake in the education policy debate.

However, democracy has profoundly changed the conditions of the debate about education, schools and education systems. First of all, because education is regulated by politics, options in this field are now considered and accepted as fundamentally debatable, according to the principle of free examination and

discussion that governs democracy and science. The debate has a place and a formal process as defined in laws and regulations. And it can come to a conclusion through legitimate procedures, even though any conclusion arrived at is, at the same time, not considered as eternal, but changeable, precisely because it is formalized and in a sense objectified in rules.

VI. THE 'MAGIC' OF LEGITIMIZATION OF SOCIAL INEQUALITIES

As is well known, the results of the inculcation and socialization process in schools are far from perfect, for very many reasons, which research into school failure attempts to identify.

However, it might help our understanding of what is often considered as a 'failure' of the students or of the school if we adopted another perspective. We might, indeed, consider that imperfect and unequal realization of the educational project is so permanent and widespread that it could just as well be considered as forming an integral part of the system, as one of its constant and basic components. Rather than considering failure as a form of malfunctioning, this viewpoint would lead to consider it is part of education systems' 'normal' or necessary functioning.

Indeed, although it works on the formal premises of equality of rights, obligations and opportunities, inequality is an integral part of the operation of schools and education systems, simply because they distribute desirable goods unequally:

- Throughout schooling, students perform unequally in relation to prevailing standards; they receive unequal marks and rewards, obtain access to unequal tracks and curricula, achieve unequal knowledge and competencies, and attain unequal grades.
- After completion of schooling, the returns on investment are unequal, and unequal levels of education typically have major consequences in terms of economic, social and cultural inequality.

This is by no means new but, until the 1950s, public education authorities and systems succeeded rather well in appearing predominantly as 'neutral arbiters in the competition for educational resources' (Halsey et al., 1997). Prevailing principles defined access to schools, achievement and outcome primarily as a function of individual merit, consisting of the additive combination of intelligence and effort. Under these governing principles, learned and incorporated by all, particularly through the schooling experience, public schools and education systems were more or less generally presumed to allocate resources equally and, more important, fairly, ensuring equal opportunity for all, regardless of gender and origin. What is new, since the 1960s, is in fact the denunciation, mainly grounded on sociological research, of major gender and social discriminations linked to the structure and the culture of education systems and the impact of this criticism on educational debate.

Besides the long-term shared experience already mentioned, an essential part of the schools' integrating effect may well not reside at the first level of learning by all from formal teaching, but on learning at a second level. In other words, the sheer learning and recognition by all of common reference standards of scholastic and of social excellence will ground the shared criteria for the fair assessment of individuals' merits, scholastic and social value and prospects.

One might say that, particularly from the point of view of those who set the standards and the rules of the game at any given time (including education policy and decision-makers and teachers), it may not be necessary and perhaps not desirable that everyone achieves excellence. In fact, capitalist societies fare rather well with major inequalities. This view may appear somewhat cynical, but it is not out of step with reality. I do not presume that anybody in particular—individual or group—would have conceived and organized such a perverse plan. I do not presume either that learning is not important in and for schools, teachers, etc. I only suggest that, given the configuration of social interests and forces within and around schools and education systems, what eventually really matters from the viewpoint of social integration is that everyone learns, recognizes and accepts:

- the standards and criteria by which scholastic and social value and excellence in general, and his/her value in particular, are assessed and judged, and
- the rules to which the corresponding assessment and judgement procedures have to obey in order to be considered legitimate and equitable (Hutmacher et al., 2001*a*).

What best guarantees the effectiveness of this particular learning as a source of legitimacy is, first and foremost, the fact that it is essentially implicit and osmotic. It is part of no formal curriculum, but rather of the rules of the scholarly game, which every student learns while playing. It pertains to the tacit knowledge of schooling learned since a very early age when no comparative observation is available to individuals and critical or hypothetical competencies are not yet developed. As soon as they enter school—between the ages of 4 and 6—children learn and internalize, for instance, that, outside the family, rewards are legitimately allocated not according to needs but on the basis of performance and merit that are assessed and acknowledged by others according to recognized standards.

Schools do more than teach knowledge and transmit technical and life skills, they also assess, judge and certify. Antoine Prost (1989) pointedly underlined that, in the configuration of challenges faced by students and their families, failure and the threat to fail have increasingly become the schools' major motivating force, mobilizing students' energy, self-discipline and activity. Indeed, what power would teachers have without their authority to assess, judge and ultimately direct their students' careers?

Schools thus provide recognized qualifications in two senses: (1) by transmitting knowledge, skills and competencies; and (2) by assessing, judging and conferring

social recognition of students' achievements and command of their subjects. Students' assessment has its strong moments, such as in tests or examinations, but in practice it is quite permanent and omnipresent throughout each student's school days. And above all, schools always assess more than they teach (Perrenoud, 1984).

There are two sides to this process of qualification. On the subjective side, those whose knowledge and skills are assessed and acknowledged forge an image of themselves that more or less reflects the way others judge their cognitive, personal and social qualifications. At the same time, on a more objective side, *others—the judges and* those who come to know the judgement (peers, parents, siblings or any third party through the diploma)—also generate a social image, an idea of that individual's competencies or qualifications based on these judgements. Auto- and hetero-definitions will tend to converge at least partly.

However, schools do not certify all their students as competent, qualified, capable, hard-working, etc. In the process, some are disqualified as being inadequate, incompetent, etc., inevitably since this is the institutions' basic motivating force and also because schools and teachers have their own reputation to maintain. They do this legitimately, even in the eyes of the disqualified, as long as these latter have also incorporated the school's criteria of excellence and fairness. Those who are qualified will perceive themselves as such; those who are disqualified by the school's judgement will define themselves accordingly. In a single process, schools gradually establish the students' qualities and merits, both in their eyes and in the eyes of others, teachers, parents, friends, future employers or whoever.

As these qualities and merits, at least partly, also predict the individuals' social place and destinies after completion of school, both objectively and subjectively, schools thus contribute to social cohesion, even when they do not achieve their formal educational objectives, provided the reference standards of excellence are recognized as legitimate and the procedures as fair. This process makes a vigorous contribution to legitimizing social inequality in the eyes of those who succeed *and* of those who fail, and thus to the pacific integration of societies despite prevailing inequalities of socio-economic conditions, positions and destinies.

The process does not succeed 100%. But evidence for its overall efficacy may be found:

- When young people who failed at school or dropped out are asked about the causes to which they attribute their failure and their unfavourable situation, the majority would typically blame themselves, not the school. But they would typically use the very terminology that they have heard many times at school: 'At school, I was lazy, undisciplined, a trouble-maker, not bright or not gifted' are the major explanations which they give—and which they have learned.
- On another level, during the last decades, wages have increasingly come to be attributed according to level of education. This widespread and widely accepted principle and practice determines one of the major inequalities of resources in our societies. It is nevertheless largely accepted. A recent study shows, for example, that three-quarters of the Swiss population accept and approve this principle, and there is little variation between the rich and the poor (Hutmacher, 2001*b*)

We probably fail to pay enough attention to the extraordinary contribution to social integration resulting from this institutional magic. At the same time, we should not ignore its possibly profound contradiction with the goal of achieving high-quality or high-level education and learning for all, which is solemnly proclaimed in policy and pedagogy discourse.

On a larger scale, we should also consider the ascending spiral that is built into the process. In order to enable the logic of social distinction to continue, even when a majority of the population shows signs of achieving the higher levels, it is sufficient that the reference culture changes or that the requirements are raised. Both conditions are easily satisfied in rapidly changing societies. In part, they result from the proper impact of educational institutions over generations. Indeed, as the general level of education rises, citizens' and parents' competencies, expectations and potential criticism of schools and education institutions rise too. We do not know, yet, if there are any limits to human plasticity, and if so, where those limits are. What we do know, however, is:

- That the standards of social excellence are changing: high-level knowledge remains indispensable, but it must above all combine with more personal and social competencies, such as autonomy, creativity, self-knowledge, a sense for initiative and entrepreneurship, flexibility, the ability to learn—i.e. the ability and the wish to identify one's own strengths and weaknesses in relation to one's own position and situation in a changing world, to identify the necessary learning steps and opportunities among a wealth of possibilities—Internet being one of them.
- That the minimum threshold of competence and knowledge that every young person should acquire in order to find a place in a new 'knowledge economy and society' has risen considerably, and is far from having been achieved. Results from the recent PISA international literacy assessment in thirty-one countries give a quite dramatic picture (OECD, 2001). Here lies a new major challenge for the education system in terms of social integration. For those below the new minimal standards, the risk of exclusion from the labour market and from 'normal' social life is now very high, because the work and life niches for individuals with very low education and competencies (e.g. the functional illiterate) have a tendency to disappear.

Both of these developments represent major challenges for the education system. Something like a paradigm shift lies ahead, which is already perceivable in the major trends

of numerous projects and experiments being conducted in countries throughout the world. At least three major shifts are advocated:

- A shift from knowledge-driven to competence-driven practices in school. The simple transmission of knowledge is no more the only or major expected learning effect from schools and within schools, and it is no more the major assessment and added-value criteria. What counts is much more the ability to learn than what is learnt, the ability to communicate than to sit still and listen, the ability to share knowledge and competencies in teams rather than isolated working, the ability to conceive, conduct and accomplish projects with others, etc. (Rychen & Salganik, 2001). Most of these abilities cannot be taught in the classical sense; they are rather learned by doing.
- A shift from input-driven to output-driven education systems and schools. There is a new policy accent on accountability, which stresses results much more than inputs (teacher and student time, equipment, money, etc.).
- A shift in the orientation of goals and responsibility to be achieved. While the institution was built around and has lived with an ideal of human excellence, i.e. a definition of (often unachievable) maximum standards of achievement, it will now have to work also with minimal standards that are to be achieved by all. This dramatically changes the expectations and the social responsibility of education systems, schools and teachers and raises such difficult question as: 'What is the school.' 'What are teachers really accountable for?' 'Can they be held accountable for the results achieved by their students?'

The fundamental model of the school, the organizational patterns and rules of the game that make up its social fabric are profoundly challenged by all these developments. The model that has remained unchanged through the course of dramatic historical changes of society and education over nearly five centuries is being challenged. My hypothesis and also my conviction is that the public school will only survive as 'public' if it succeeds in demonstrating its increasing quality. And this will also entail a redefinition and re-institutionalization of its organization, of the configuration of roles, places and responsibilities that make up the everyday life and learning of students. Finding a new coherent and stable arrangement will cost much debate, many projects and experiences, and much time.

* * *

In conclusion, it would appear important, in any discussion of the curriculum, curriculum development and reform, to bear in mind:

- The central role that the organization and the rules of the game in schools, as defined by different stakeholders (policy makers, principals, teachers, parents, employers and other components of civil society) plays in what is actually learned by students. There is perhaps more curriculum in the rules of the game or in the implicit or 'hidden' curriculum than in official formal curricula and textbooks.
- The stakes that are invested in schools for and between groups and classes with unequal resources, perspectives, destinies and the role the school plays as a source of legitimization of such inequalities, both objectively and subjectively. It will become more and more important that no young person leaves schools without qualifications and with a negative self-image.

Increasingly, we will have to consider how the rules of the scholarly game can really empower students for active participation in the democratic shaping of a rapidly changing society. Citizenship is too often conceived as an exclusively individualistic perspective, while history shows how much social change depends both on individuals and on collective action, i.e. on the capacity to organize social forces democratically that become effective in the democratic process. Here too a paradigm shift may be required.

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INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Reforming school curricula in Latin America: a focus on Argentina

Silvina Gvirtz and Silvina Larripa

I. INTRODUCTION

This text intends to present the ways in which Latin American countries have addressed the problem of curricular regulation from the setting up of national education systems in the late nineteenth century until the present.

By 'curricular regulation' is understood the decision-making process (involving the national, provincial or regional governments, municipalities or local governments, and the schools themselves) where each level has different powers and responsibilities to prepare and make use of certain instruments that regulate the goals, contents and outcomes of educational processes at a given moment in time. These so-called 'instruments of curricular regulation' are, fundamentally:

- *The policy of curricular definition* (and general government of the education system), which delineates the attributes corresponding to the objectives and contents of education for each level in the decision-making process.
- *The documents and curricular materials themselves* (their internal structure and contents), which are among the principal ways of presenting the official curricular policy.
- *The policy on the distribution of textbooks*, i.e. control over one of the most important means of expressing (together with documents and curricular materials) the objectives and contents of education.
- *The supervision/assessment system of education*, a fundamental mechanism in the control/regulation of the relationship between the official curricular policy proposed and the one actually implemented.

When observing the problem of curricular regulation in Latin American education systems from their origins until the present, it is possible to observe two major models or regulatory systems.

The first—called *the foundational centralized model of curricular regulation*—was appropriate when the education systems in the region were being consolidated and quantitatively expanded, a period embracing the last decades of the nineteenth century until the 1960s. This model sought to guarantee the teaching of the same contents to every student, in order to homogenize their instruction in values, language and additional knowledge necessary for civic life. The leading motif was to give *equal* opportunities to students through *equal* educational contents. Its characteristics are described in Part II below.

At the end of the 1960s, and more intensely by the beginning of the 1970s, educational systems experienced a general crisis when their ability to provide relevant knowledge to all students left plenty of room for doubt. These adverse diagnoses brought about changes in curricular matters, though the movement was insufficient to break with the centralized model of regulation. What these challenging diagnoses did reveal, however, was the idea that if an education favouring social inclusion was to be provided, efforts should tend not towards non-egalitarian policies but towards equitable ones. That is to say, instead of offering the same education to everybody, the need was acknowledged to provide diverse or remedial courses and contents to guarantee equal results. The third part of this text will deal with these issues.

As from the 1990s, a tide of educational reforms in Latin America finally introduced a change in the ways in which curricular regulation had been operating in most countries of the region. This new model's characteristics are discussed in the fourth section of this paper.

The fifth and last section offers data and reflections about the real extent of the new means of curricular evaluation in the region, emphasizing Argentine experience.

Hopefully, the act of placing in a historical perspective the problem of curricular regulation in the Latin American context will be sufficiently valuable to deepen our understanding of educational reform processes in general and curricular policy in particular, so that whatever our ambitions for these education systems may be they will become a goal worth achieving.

II. THE FOUNDATIONAL CENTRALIZED MODEL

Since the creation of the first education systems in Latin America, policies implemented in relation to the curriculum—understood as a set of study plans and programmes[1]—were highly centralized. From national levels (for instance, in the case of Argentina) or federal States (as in Brazil), what ought to be taught in all schools of a country or in each regional state was set out in detail and with precision.

1. The first study plans and programmes

During the formation periods of these systems (the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, depending on the country of Latin America to which we refer), the structure of the study plans and programmes in the countries of the region was characterized fundamentally by:

- the inclusion of a *large number of curricular areas* (usually about fourteen assignments, at both primary and secondary levels);
- contents organized into a matrix of two variables (discipline and school time), which resulted in greater control and *homogenization of the activities* taking place in each of the schools that made up the education system;
- many curricular contents being presented in a *high degree of detail*;[2]
- and an emphasis on those contents related to *the simple provision of information*.

Clearly, curricular policies and planning did not end, neither now nor in the past, with the sole centralized preparation of the study plans and programmes. On the contrary, the levels of government responsible for education in Latin America designed and strongly intervened in two other regulations defining curricular policies, namely:

- the *policy of textbooks circulation* within the education system;
- and the *mechanisms of assessment and control* of the learning taught in schools.

2. Textbooks

With regard to textbook policy, it is worth pointing out that in the countries of the region there existed central government departments that were in charge of the supervision and approval of texts to be used in schools. No book lacking the approval of the corresponding government department could be distributed in schools (in many countries, this is still the case). Teachers and schools disobeying this regulation could be disciplined. Thus, the State not only regulated the content to be taught at the level of lesson plans and programmes, but that of textbooks too. This enhanced central control over educational contents and the focussing required for their transmission.

In the case of Argentina, for example, since the late nineteenth century until 1940, the National Council of Education, through its Didactic Commission, 'prescribed and adopted the most adequate textbooks for public schools, encouraging their edition and improvement by means of contests and stimuli in order to ensure their uniform and permanent adoption at reasonable prices for a period of no less than two years'.

More often than not, however, the selection of textbooks for use in schools had more to do with the lobbying skills of publishers, political favours and preferences, and matters of personal relations. In all cases, the need to *control the content* of books used for teaching in schools was present (Rein, 1998).

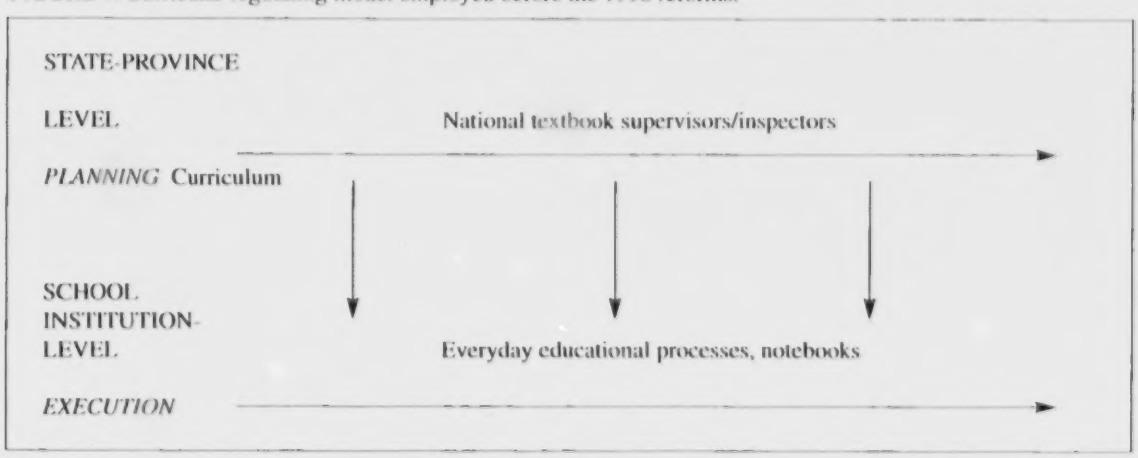
3. Assessment and control of the system

As regards the second means of curricular regulation, *assessment*, it can be said that during the period of setting up and consolidating education systems in the region, a model developed by central levels of the system (ministry of education, national councils of education, etc.) prevailed and was put into effect by a body of inspectors. This group visited schools, controlled the students' copybooks to verify that norms set by law were being followed and that no unauthorized content was being taught, and established direct contact with the teaching staff, attending classes and reviewing the lesson plan. It was a form of *centralized control over every aspect of teaching* in the school.

4. Synthesis: regulation of the curriculum

Accordingly, it is possible to represent the ways in which the central levels monitored institutional educational processes during this period as shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1. Curricular regulating model employed before the 1990 reforms.



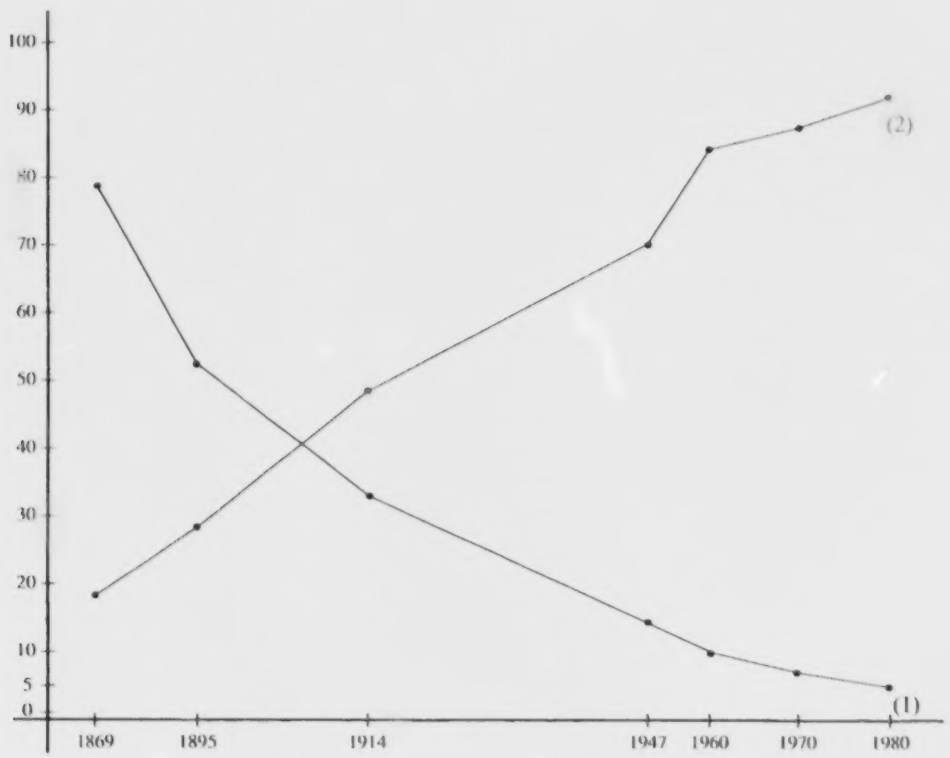
On the whole, the *centralized model of curricular regulation* was characterized by the concentration in the system's central levels of government of the principal regulating mechanisms for contents, i.e.:

- the production of the curriculum, meaning decisions about *the goals and content of education;*
- the circulation of textbooks, that is to say the control over the *forms of representation* of those goals and contents;
- and the system of supervision—the fundamental mechanism to *control* that the relationship between the policies *proposed* at the central level and those *effectively executed* in educational institutions was the anticipated one.

The vertical logic of curricular materials and other central mechanisms of regulation and curricular control left hardly any room for curricular adaptations on the part of teachersæthey were required to execute what others had devised. This was very effective bearing in mind that one of the main objectives of these education systems was the homogenization of the population in Latin America. This strikingly heterogeneous population of immigrants, natives, blacks and creoles were to participate in the construction of unique nations and forms of citizenship. The particularity of the Latin American case is that, for the most part, it was the State, through the institution of schooling and the diffusion of a common language and certain shared values, that was responsible for the construction of the nation (Oszlack, 1984).

For this reason, the State, in every country of Latin America, sooner or later proposed to achieve universal primary schooling. Argentina was a pioneer in this policy of teaching literacy and homogenizing the population. Figure 2 and Table 1, relative to the Argentine case, bear proof of the capacity shown by the education system to extend its coverage and reduce illiteracy. The evolution of illiteracy throughout Argentina is presented.

FIGURE 2. The decline of illiteracy and the spread of primary schooling in Argentina, 1869–1980.



1.= illiteracy rate; 2. = level of primary school attendance.
Source: CFI, 1965; Tedesco, Braslavsky & Carciofi, 1987.

These efforts continued in all Latin American countries throughout the twentieth century. In the 1960s, the rate of expansion of Latin American education was the highest in the world: between 1960 and 1970 the growth index for higher education was 258.3%; for secondary education, 247.9%; and the enrolment rate in basic education grew by 167.6% (Torres & Puiggrós, 1997). Expansion of the system was, however, always associated with centralized policies in curricular matters.

III. OBSOLESCENCE AND INTERNAL DIFFERENTIATION

By the end of the 1970s and during the 1980s, unpromising diagnoses begin to accumulate that questioned the capacity of the education systems of the region to offer a good education to the whole school-age population (Tedesco, 1992).

On the one hand—and as previously pointed out—although the system had increased enrolment capacity in many countries, Latin American researchers, who focused on the search for possible relationships between the type of education received and the social origin of the students, revealed the existence of firmly differentiated educational circuits in a system supposedly meant to offer the same educational opportunities for all.[3] Distribution of knowledge was not egalitarian, but discriminated by social sector. On the other hand, changes in society revealed the existence of a school that was transmitting out-of-date information that lacked social significance. Within this frame, the changes and continuities that were operational in the traditionally centralized mechanisms of curricular regulation will be specified.

1. Modifications in study plans and programmes

Faced with social changes indicating the need to come up with a new type of knowledge for the productive participation of citizens, the countries of the region set about introducing modifications in their study plans and programmes. In the case of Argentina, for example—and as part of a more general regional trend—various attempts towards the updating and reformulation of study plans and programmes were evident from the 1960s until the 1990s.[4] These efforts to launch curricular reform pursued two main objectives:

- incorporating into schooling up-to-date contents and new forms of organizing teaching (for example, the contents of different disciplines were united into areas of knowledge);
- adjusting the curriculum to suit the political necessities of some of the current governments.

In all cases, curricular renovation continued under the aegis of a centralized curriculum with highly specified contents that teachers had to execute without any consideration of differences in the student population.

2. Textbook policy until the 1990s

Even if curricular reforms were numerous, the same could not be said about the production of new textbooks. Until the 1990s, textbooks in general were mostly re-editions of old ones. This was justified by the difficulties that the publishers encountered in obtaining official approval for new proposals. Committees in charge of these matters were not only slow, they also responded to the government in power. The chances of obtaining approval of a book depended mostly on the lobbying ability of different publishers. Books in use until the late 1980s had been published in the 1940s or 1950s —and even in the 1930s! This resulted in a significant lack of synchronization between the changes at the curricular level and their reflection in textbooks (Gvirtz, 2000). A similar situation could be found in every country of the region.

It is worth noting at this point that during periods of dictatorship in the region not only was the policy of textbook production particularly restricted, but circulation of some of those already in existence was forbidden by the military governments who considered them 'subversive' or contrary to the regime.

3. The system of supervision

As regards the way to assess the performance of the system, the model still prevailing in the region is that of organized control based on a body of inspectors in direct contact with the teaching personnel in schools. Although this system has become with time more formal, bureaucratic and less efficient, it continues to exercise total control over daily educational activity without any intermediaries.

TABLE 1. Evolution of illiteracy in Argentina, 1869–1980 (percentage of population over 14 years old)

Year	Illiteracy rate	Year	Illiteracy rate
1869	77.4	1960	8.5
1895	53.3	1970	7.4
1914	35.9	1980	6.1
1947	13.6		

Source: Ministry of Justice and Education, 1985.

4. Synthesis: curricular regulation during the 1970s and 1980s

The various modifications introduced in curricular documents during this period were accomplished despite the fact that curricular management and assessment continued to remain in the hands of the central levels of government.

The regulation model of a centralistic nature was therefore still in force, even though certain control mechanisms (such as the inspectors' system, for example) were being questioned or excessively bureaucratized. In this context, the system's aims were still to homogenize the population, providing everybody with the same contents and methods. It could be said that the education system proclaimed both systemic simultaneity as well as methodic simultaneity. A long-anticipated change of strategies in curricular reforms would have to wait until the 1990s.

IV. THE 1990s: NEW REFORM PROPOSALS

It was in the 1990s that the majority of Latin American countries initiated wide-scale processes of reform of their education systems, mainly through the adoption of general laws of education. Table 2 illustrates this phenomenon:

According to the data in this table, general laws of educational reform were proclaimed in the 1990s in eight of the twelve countries from which information could be obtained. In the remaining four (Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru and Uruguay), an intense revision of the existing situation was initiated, giving form to partial norms, policies and projects conforming to the general innovatory tendencies affecting the region. It was finally in Paraguay that some of these innovative principles, proposals and definitions were incorporated into the National Constitution (Braslavsky, 1995).

These new legal frames introduced modifications in education systems. Among them were profound changes in the means of managing the curriculum (which implied, in turn, transforming the structure of curricular materials) and changes in assessment mechanisms.

1. Innovations in curricular management

The reforms of the 1990s proposed a radical transformation in the forms of curriculum management. The search focused on how to move from a traditionally centralized model to a less centralized management system in which curriculum definition included other partners and ceased to be an exclusive concern of central levels of government.

In other words, since the reforms of the 1990s, a new model of curricular management has begun to take form in the majority of the countries in the region. It is one in which the organs of the central government lay down the general frame of basic contents and/or goals, while each jurisdiction assumes responsibility for defining plans and programmes, and each school likewise defines its detailed specifications. This may be achieved through an institutional curricular project which, while responding to more general considerations, relies on the possibility of putting into practice a set of objectives, contents and educational activities better suited to respond to the needs and expectations of each school's local community.

In the case of Argentina, the approval of the Federal Law of Education in 1993 introduced a process of educational transformation that included reorganization of the levels of curricular definition. This implied the incorporation of new partners in the development and management of curricular policies. According to this law, the central levels of government of the education system were responsible for the preparation of the Common Basic Contents (CBC) for the whole country, thus providing each

TABLE 2. Latin American norms regulating national education systems

Country	National general norm/law	Year
Argentina	Ley Federal de Educación	1993
Bolivia	Ley de Reforma Educativa	1994
Brazil	Ley de Directrices y Bases de la Educación	1996
Colombia	Ley General de Educación	1994
Costa Rica	Ley Nacional de Educación	1957
Chile	Ley Orgánica de Constitución de la Enseñanza	1991
Ecuador	Ley General de Educación	1985
Mexico	Ley General de Educación	1993
Paraguay	Constitución Nacional	1992
Peru	Ley General de Educación	1982
Dominican Republic	Plan Decenal de Educación	1992
Uruguay	Ley de Educación	1985

Source: Author, based on Braslavsky, 1995; and Braslavsky, 2001.

one of the provinces with a minimal frame within which each jurisdiction had to develop its specific curricular document (DC). Finally, enough freedom was to be given to each educational establishment for the final level of curricular definition, according to the Institutional Educational Project (PEI) of each school. Figure 3 presents briefly the levels of curricular definition: the CBC, the DC and the PEI

This new model of curricular management would seem to reflect better the actual demand to promote an education able to respond to the needs of the people attending each institution, within the limits of a curriculum that in turn responded to a more general set of objectives and contents defined at the national level. So, at the same time that diversification of educational supply at the level of contents was made possible, an effort was also made to guarantee a set of educational goals and knowledge common to all people.

In accordance with this model of curricular definition, the documents defined at the national level since the 1990s display a different structure than their predecessors. As framing materials to be specified at different levels of curricular management, these documents are remarkable because curricular spaces are no longer clearly outlined and detailed as in the traditional model, but form groups of contents and goals for each area of knowledge, allowing various combinations and interconnections. In this way, a multiplicity of curricular spaces is made possible.

As to the essential content of curricular documents, it can be stated that in the countries of the region there is a general tendency to reorganize the knowledge involved in the process of school transmission around the concept of developing children's abilities. In general terms, the notion of competence may be defined as 'an internal procedure incorporating conceptual knowledge and which should be in a permanent process of revision and perfection, at the same time as it allows for the resolution of a practical or symbolic problem' (Braslavsky, 2001, p. 249). In more specific terms, these types of competencies refer to:

- fundamental capacities (of language, communication and calculation);
- personal and social dispositions (related to personal development, self-esteem, solidarity, teamwork, self-control, integrity, a spirit of enterprise, personal responsibility, among others);
- cognitive abilities (capacities of abstraction, systemic thinking, learning, innovation, creation) (Cox in Braslavsky, 2001).

The development of competencies implies, on the one hand, curricular renewal—school contents are revised. Various countries have introduced for the first time notions of geology in the natural sciences; of sociology, political science, anthropology and economy in the social sciences; while approaches to the teaching of chemistry, physics and geography have been brought up to date. Technology is included as a discipline; progress has been made in the introduction of foreign languages and native tongues as optional subjects (Braslavsky, 2001).

On the other hand, the development of competencies carries with it a fundamental change in the conception of the type of relations that should exist between the development of disciplinary and technological knowledge taking place in the interior of the scientific communities, and the requirements demanded by a social and productive participation in each particular national context as well as in the international context. As a Chilean researcher put it, the change presented by the new curricular systems of the region—mainly concerning the middle school—can be synthesized as the passage from encyclopaedic communication to the development of abilities granting access to knowledge as a major orientating principle (Cox in Braslavsky, 2001).

FIGURE 3. Levels of curricular definition introduced by the Argentine Federal Law of Education, 1993

FEDERAL COUNCIL of CULTURE and EDUCATION **(National Minister of Education and provincial ministers)** ↓	**CBC Common Basic Contents**
PROVINCIAL EDUCATIONAL ORGANS OF GOVERNMENT ↓	**DC Curricular Design**
SCHOOLS	**PEI Institutional Educational Project**

Finally, and concerning the processes of curricular definition previously analysed, the establishment at the national level of basic competencies to be achieved may serve as the principle or axis of the process of curricular specification, thus offering a possible means for the articulation of the goals and/or general contents with those specifications of contents and achievements developed at particular local levels.

In Brazil, for example, the curricular structure of the middle school (between 14 and 15 years of age) is arranged into three areas: language codes and their technologies; natural sciences, mathematics and their technologies; and human sciences and their technologies (Law of Directives and Bases of Education—LDBE). A set of basic competencies to be achieved as the final outcome of education was established for each one of these areas, altogether forming the *National Common Basis* for all curricula. The curricular structure includes a *diversified part* that can be modified each year according to local characteristics and that of the student body (Berger de Filho, 2001). The curricula to be adopted should at the same time be:

- *diversified as to the contents,* focusing on areas or nuclei of knowledge that respond to the needs of production—of goods, services and knowledge—and of individuals or groups of individuals;
- *unified as to the cognitive, affective and social competencies* to be established based on these diversified contents in order to give everybody a general and common education.

These principles of curricular organization derive from the conception that contents are not ends in themselves, but the basic means to constitute cognitive and social competencies, giving them priority over information (ibid.).

2. Changes in national systems of assessment

Regarding assessment (another mechanism of curricular regulation referred to when describing the foundational characteristics of education systems in the region), between the late 1980s and early 1990s national systems of assessment of educational outcomes were established, as shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3. Latin America: national systems of educational assessment

Country	Assessment/measurement system	Year of installation of the programme at national level
Argentina	Sistema Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad (SINEC)	1993
Bolivia	Sistema de Medición y Evaluación de la Calidad de la Educación (SIMECAL)	1994
Brazil	Sistema Nacional de Evaluación de la Educación Básica (SAEB)	1990
Colombia	Sistema Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad de la Educación (SABER)	1990
Costa Rica	Programa de Pruebas Nacionales del Ministerio de Educación Pública (PROMECE)	1986[a]
Chile	Sistema de Medición de la Calidad de la Educación (SIMCE)	1988[b]
Ecuador	Sistema Nacional de Medición de Logros Académicos (APRENDO)	1995
Mexico		1992[c]
Paraguay	Sistema Nacional de Evaluación del Proceso Educativo (SNEPE)	1992
Peru	Pruebas CRECER (Crecer con Calidad y Equidad en el Rendimiento), Unidad de Medición de Calidad Educativa (UMC), Ministerio de Educación.	1996[d]
Uruguay	Unidad de Medición de Resultados Educativos (UMRE)	1994

Notes:

(a) Costa Rica has conducted educational assessments since 1986. Nevertheless, the programme actually in use dates from 1993.

(b) The basis of the Chilean measuring programme was devised towards 1978. In 1988, with the transfer of public schools to the municipalities, the programme was called SIMCE and since 1991 is administered by the Ministry of National Education.

(c) Mexico has conducted school performance assessments since 1976. In 1992, the programme became the responsibility of the federal government.

(d) The Measuring Unit of the Ministry of Education of Peru dates from 1996, while the CRECER tests were first introduced in 1998.

Source: Authors, based on Martínez Rodríguez, 2000; Barrera, 2000; Wolff, 1998; and Ravela, 2001.

When comparing the dates at which programmes measuring education managed by national ministries were established in the region with the dates of approval of laws of educational reform in the same countries, it becomes evident that there is an obvious coincidence. This happened because, while reviewing these laws, many countries viewed the national systems of assessment as fundamental elements in the promotion of educational reform.

Such was the case in Argentina, for example. The programme of educational assessment has been, since its conception in 1993, a system managed by the national State (National System of Quality Assessment—SINEC). Its legal basis can be found in articles 48, 49 and 50 of the Federal Law of Education (24.195) of 1993. We may quote Wolff (1998, p. 20) on this subject: 'the objectives of the assessment system were to promote decentralization, provide key information about education's situation, supervise progress in the achievement of reform goals, identify inequities or insufficiencies as well as the areas requiring compensatory programmes for populations in disadvantaged situations', among others.

In general terms, it is possible to state that the educational measurement/assessment systems taking shape in the region during the 1990s are centralized programmes for monitoring or control of the outcomes of the educational transformation process operating in the frame of more decentralized curricular management systems. Braslavsky (1999) synthesizes it: 'In effect, if previously the intention was to guarantee results completely regulating school organization and teaching methods through the determination of school facilities, a timetable bearing homogeneous time distributions, a unique curriculum and permanent control by supervisors of school directors and by directors of teachers, now the purpose is to guarantee those results via the external assessment of the material learned. That is, through a procedure dispersed in time and systematic in its application, centred on products and not on processes'.

3. Textbook policy since the 1990s

Although not every country of the region had a centralized policy for controlling the circulation of textbooks, those that did exercise control over texts to be used in schools from the central level have now changed their methods. The range of situations includes those countries with no regulations at all, to those changing their regulation in a move towards more transparent control systems, to those maintaining former regulations with minor modifications.

In the case of Argentina, deregulation of textbook circulation has been complete. Towards 1990, the National Ministry of Education ceased to have the right to supervise and decide what type of books could or could not be used in schools. The production and circulation of school texts was left to the influence of market forces.

This had a major influence on the ways in which the educational reform was finally implemented in Argentina. In Chile's case, for example, although the State continues to exercise an important role in matters of school texts, at present 'the Ministry has made growing efforts to close the gap between the production of school texts by private publishers and curricular reform. Furthermore, since the year 2000, the team in charge of assessment, buying and distribution of texts is part of the Unity of Curriculum and Assessment' (Cox in Braslavsky, 2001, p. 16).

4. Synthesis of the changes

It is possible to summarize the principal changes and continuities that have operated in the methods of curricular regulation from the beginning of the education systems of the region until now as shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4. Curricular regulation of Latin America education systems

Mechanisms of curricular regulation	**Setting up and consolidation of education systems**	**General educational reforms of the 1990s**
Levels of defining curricular policy	Centralized at the State level.	*Tendency* towards decentralization of curricular policy: diverse levels of curricular definition.
Curricular documents	Unique plans and programmes centrally defined in extreme detail.	Frame of contents and/or national common goals, and diverse plans and programmes in jurisdictions and/or institutions.
The system's manner of supervision/assessment	1. System of supervisors; 2. Centralized; 3. Responding to processes; 4. Internal control of the system.	1. National assessment (with participation in international tests in some cases); 2. Centralized; 3. Responding to results; 4. Internal control (in those cases where the educational service continues to be offered by the State—example: Uruguay) and external (by comparisons with other countries and the interior of the country in the case of the National ministries without schools'— example: Argentina).
Circulation policy on textbooks	Strongly regulated by the State	Tendency towards deregulation of circulation of school textbooks in some countries of the region.

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V. THE PRESENT SITUATION.

The intention in this section is to show the decisive impact that the educational reforms of the 1990s have had in the region, mainly in regard to: (a) decentralization policies affecting processes of curricular definition; and (b) national systems of educational assessment.

1. Has the process of curricular definition in Argentina been decentralized?

As has been stated before, until the 1990s, the plans, programmes and/or curricula at different levels were carefully designed by the national and/or provincial states. Teachers were required to confine themselves strictly to applying the documents' detailed contents and to respecting the sequences stipulated. Some curricula went as far as determining the classroom practices that teachers should employ when working on the contents. The City of Buenos Aires's curricular design in force in 1981 was one of the most evident cases of curricular hyper-prescription, where not only teaching contents were presented in detail, but the teachers' activities in the classroom as well.

The curricular reform of the 1990s not only implied changes in the contents to be taught in schools; there was also a suggestion that the national/provincial/teacher contents should be redesigned. The general proposal of the curricular reform was to leave in the hands of provinces the preparation of curricular designs. However, these basic contents became in practice the new curricular design used by the schools. Several reasons explain this situation:

(1) Although contents are not presented by grades but in cycles and do allow for some flexibility, they give various interpretations of the 'minimum'. However, the amount of contents that is considered as the basic minimum is such that it became quite difficult for any school to teach anything beyond this minimum.

(2) Once common basic contents were approved, instead of distributing them to the local technical units, they were sent directly to every school in the country. Upon receiving them, schools assumed that these were the documents they had to follow.

(3) Simultaneously, and for different reasons, provinces either refused to modify their designs in the belief that they already corresponded to the CBC or experienced delays amounting to several years before setting up new curricula, as shown next by Dussel (2001) in Table 5.

(4) Teachers in public schools, upon receiving the CBC, regarded it as the document they had to follow if the traditional logic of the education system still prevailed.

(5) Publishers, unable to adjust to provincial markets and in search of profits, made similar basic textbooks for all provinces, sometimes printing separate editions for particular provinces or regions. They used the CBCs as models and put together interesting and diverse proposals for textbooks. As explained, the publishing market was later deregulated and texts no longer had to be approved by ad-hoc commissions of the national or provincial ministries.

(6) Private schools, seeking to be in the 'vanguard' of the reform, and owing to the bad press traditionally reserved for the public education systems, adopted the CBCs as the contents that they were to introduce.

To sum up, CBCs were adopted as the new school curriculum. Deregulation of the publishing market played in favour of introduction, since the CBCs were put into operation via the new textbooks that served to fill the void left vacant by the delay in the preparation of curriculum designs.

In other countries of Latin America—with different characteristics and a greater State involvement on textbook production and circulation—it is possible to identify similar processes due to the slowness of intermediate bureaucracies to adapt to the changes.

2. Implementation of the national education system in Argentina

In Argentina in 1993, the National Assessment System for the Quality of Education (SINEC) was created within the Ministry of Culture and Education. Henceforward, annual examinations were applied to representative samples of students in order to find out the level of learning achieved in schools, municipalities or provinces, and to lay the ground for comparisons.

Although reports were prepared in order to allow comparisons between jurisdictions and regions, in Argentina, contrary to what happened in other countries—Chile, for example—the Ministry of Education did not set up rankings by establishments. Even though some progress had been made in the introduction of an evaluation culture (Experton, 1999), the national assessment mechanism failed to introduce a competitive component in Argentina.

Nevertheless—and paradoxically—even though the tests had been made on the basis of random samples, in 1998 and 1999 the Ministry awarded prizes to schools that had obtained the best results in the previous year's tests, claiming that they were the education system's best schools. This information was clearly not valid since the assessment had been conducted on a sample and was not a census. Coincidentally, other schools that had obtained good SINEC scores became the site of internships for teachers or technical assistance for schools that, on more than a few occasions, had not been assessed.

To put it briefly, a national assessment system in continuous operation was initiated in Argentina. However, policies concerning the use of the information obtained and the definition of instruments used for the system's assessment has been constantly questioned by various sectors of society. Implementation of the evaluations has always been in the hands of the national Ministry of Education, in complete disregard of the independence and

TABLE 5. Curricular materials EGB-3: state of preparation and distribution by level of implementation.[a]

Provinces	Type of materials actually in use in schools/version and date
PROVINCES WITH FULL IMPLEMENTATION	
Corrientes	Curricular design. Draft version. March 1998.
Chaco	Curricular design. Second version. December 1998.
Neuquen	Curricular design. Version December 1999. Distributed.
Río Negro	Curricular design. Preliminary version. 1999.
Santiago del Estero	Curricular version. Draft version. 1998.
Tucumán	Curricular version. Second draft version. April 1998.
PROVINCES WITH LARGE-SCALE OR GRADUAL IMPLEMENTATION	
Buenos Aires	Curricular design. Final version. November 1999.
Catamarca	Curricular design. (General pedagogic documents and by curricular areas.) Draft version. 1998.
Córdoba	Basic Unified Cycle (CBU). Version 1997. Distributed.
Chubut	Curricular design. Preliminary version. 1997–98.
Entre Ríos	Curricular design. Definitive version. 1998.
Formosa	Curricular design. Preliminary consultative version. October 1998.
Jujuy	Curricular design. Version 2.0 (preliminary). February 1999.
La Pampa	Curricular design general frame (definitive version). Curricular materials by areas (Consultative version). 1998.
La Rioja	Curricular design. Version September 1999.
Mendoza	Curricular development materials. 1st. Part. Consultative version. March 1998.
Misiones	Curricular arrangement and didactic orientations. Almost definitive version. February 1998.
Salta	Curricular design. Draft version. 1997–98.
San Juan	Curricular design. Consultative version. March 1998.
San Luis	Curricular design. First version (draft). December 1997.
Santa Cruz	Training modules. 1998. Curricular design in preparation.
Santa Fe	Outline and documents for the elaboration of the Provincial Curricular Design and Didactic Orientations. Definitive version. 1999.
Tierra del Fuego	Curricular design (documents by curricular areas, except FE and C). Version 1.0. June 1998.
IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS	
City of Bs As	1999. Initiation of elaboration of CD for EGB 3. Preliminary version.

Notes: (a) Provinces report that, following the implementation of preliminary versions in schools, the CD for the third EGB cycle is being revised.
Source: Programme of Curricular Management and Training, *State of curricular situation in the provinces*, Buenos Aires, Ministry of Education, 2000.

competence with which they were carried out. This has led to the persistence of vices inherent in a bureaucratic administration: particularly, and among others things, no guarantee of transparency and little participation from the regions in the design (Llach, Montaya & Roldán, 1999 ; Andrada, Norodonski & Nores, 2002).

It is worth mentioning that several provincial jurisdictions have developed assessment systems parallel to the national one, of variable technical quality and with diverse political and educational purposes. Some other systems, such as the one in the Province of Buenos Aires, clearly set out to establish themselves as parallel assessment models to SINEC, introducing the assessment of knowledge linked to moral and civic training that had not been envisaged by the national system.

Finally, and increasing still more the complexities of the set of mechanisms associated with educational assessment, the old system of inspectors is still in force and, thus, many authors speak of a widely justified *hyper-regulation* of the education system, since the same school in the same year may be evaluated by the national test system (SINEC), the evaluation team from the jurisdiction to which it belongs and, furthermore, may be inspected by the ministerial supervisors.

3. Synthesis: curricular regulation in Argentina since the 1990s

Figure 4 represents the characteristics specifically adopted by the levels of curricular definition in Argentina.

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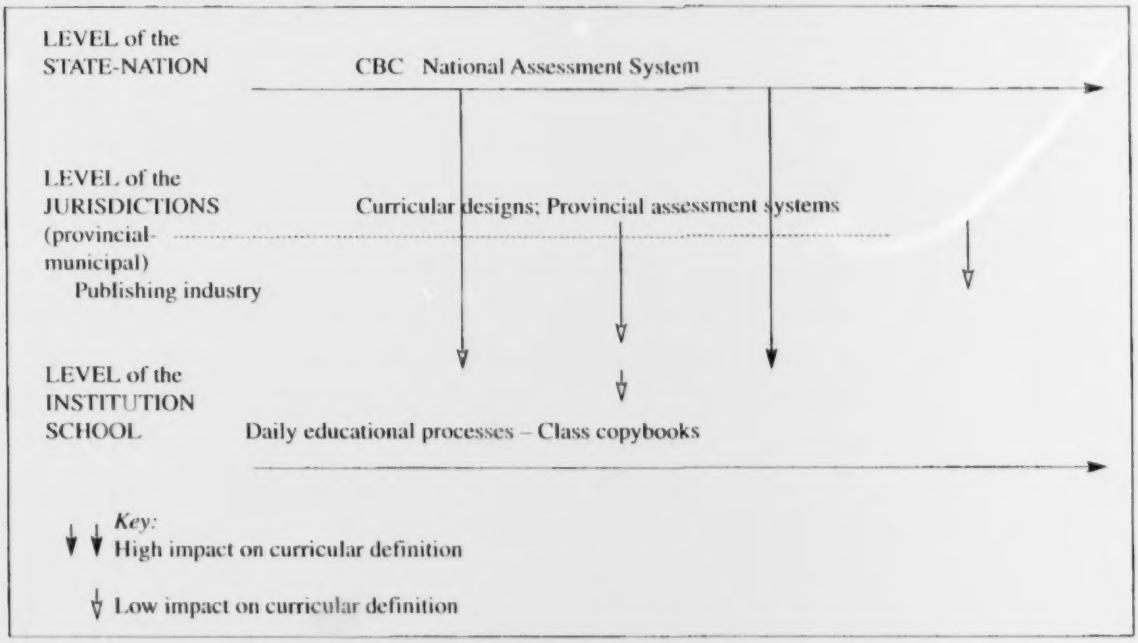
FIGURE 4. Argentina: levels of curricular definition after the 1990 reforms



As shown, and in conformity with the actual situation brought about by the implementation of the proposed reforms during the 1990s in Argentina, the central level of government of the education system (mainly the Ministry of Education and Culture) retained its decisive role, both in the definition of goals and in teaching contents, as well as in the assessment of achieved educational outcomes, with its impact having a direct effect at the institutional level.

Likewise, the figure indicates the key role played by the publishing industry in this process, paving the way for direct implementation in schools of the basic contents of initial, primary and secondary education that had been developed by technical teams within the National Ministry of Education.

The Argentine Federal Law of Education of 1993 established that these basic contents of the CBCs were to be an input (never an output) of the defining process of curricular design to be operated at the level of provincial jurisdictions. However, it is clear that the development of curricular design at the local educational level has proven to be a slow and complicated process, thus reducing the effectiveness of decentralized curriculum management.

In such an absorbing and, at the same time, flexible curricular frame, the CBCs nevertheless have allowed 'ad-hoc' curricular adaptations at the level of schools, a process not to be disregarded since it leads to a diversity of curricular policies within an educational system determined to abandon neither the quality of education nor equity in the distribution of the educational service, so as to guarantee the social inclusion of the whole population.

Notes

1. To understand further the concept of curriculum, please refer to the work of Silvina Gvirtz and Mariano Palamidessi, *El ABC de la tarea docente: currículum y enseñanza*, Buenos Aires, Aique, 1998.
2. As to specific contents, the study plans and programmes in this period conceived the transmission of topics divided into branches of knowledge, as follows: national language, reading and writing; arithmetic (including mainly numerical operations, the decimal metric system and the national systems of money, weight and measurements); geography of each country in particular and notions of world geography; history of each country in particular and notions of world history; morality and citizenship; learning about the National Constitution. Furthermore, it was usual to find different assignments for each sex: crafts and home economics for girls; and simple military exercises for boys. *Source:* Ley de Educación Común, No. 1420, Argentina, 1884, art. 6..
3. See the work by Cecilia Braslavsky, *La discriminación educativa en la Argentina*, Buenos Aires, FLACSO/Miño & Dávila Ed., 1985. Here the author gives an account of the process of internal differentiation occurring in the Argentine education system.
4. A study about the changes made in contents and approaches for the teaching of science in Argentina can be found in Silvina Gvirtz et al., *El color de lo incoloro: miradas para pensar la enseñanza de las ciencias*, Buenos Aires, Ediciones Novedades Educativas, 2000.

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The challenges of social inclusion in Northen Ireland: citizenship and life skills

Michael Arlow

INTRODUCTION

The people of Northern Ireland have been directly involved in communal conflict since 1968 when the violence of the current phase of 'the Troubles' erupted onto our streets. Much violence, hope and despair and many political initiatives followed.

On 31 August 1994 the Irish Republican Army (IRA or nationalist movement) declared a 'complete cessation of military operations'. The Combined Loyalist Military Command (unionist movement) followed suit on 13 October of the same year. The IRA cessation broke down at 7:01pm on 9 February 1996 when a massive car bomb exploded near Canary Wharf, London, killing two, injuring 100 and causing £85 million worth of damage. The cessation was reinstated on 20 July 1997 and is still in operation.

The 'Good Friday' or 'Belfast' Agreement (generally, nationalists prefer 'Good Friday', unionists prefer 'Belfast') was signed on 10 April 1998. As Mo Mowlam's biographer Julia Langdon (2000) has commented: 'it may not have been perfect in anyone's book, but that was partly the point: everyone was a little dissatisfied'. Nevertheless, in the referendum that followed on 22 May 1998 simultaneously in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, 71.2% of people in Northern Ireland and 94.39% in the Republic voted in favour of the agreement. Since then, the Northern Ireland Executive, set up under the agreement, has had a precarious existence.

To live in Northern Ireland today is to feel that we are emerging from a conflict that has left more than 3,000 dead and many thousands injured, that we stand on the brink of a new, peaceful and democratic, and potentially prosperous future. At the same time there is a sure and certain knowledge that there is also an almost equal chance of a catastrophic slide back into violence and chaos.

Murray Print (1999) quotes John F. Kennedy, himself quoting H.G. Wells: 'There is an old saying that the course of civilization is a race between catastrophe and education. In a democracy such as ours, we must make sure that education wins'. At times it has felt as if we are engaged in precisely that race. This paper seeks to tell the story of a small part of that experience.

II. EDUCATION AND THE CONFLICT

For much of the early part of the 'Troubles', schools were seen as safe havens, a protected environment where the violence and communal conflict were excluded. Teachers often saw their role as one of limiting discussion of controversial issues and preventing the outbreak of dissension in their oasis of peace. For many young people, this provided the only stability in an otherwise turbulent landscape.

Within the education system an appreciation grew of the responsibility to face the challenges presented by the conflict in a more proactive way. The Department of Education (DENI) was made responsible for community relations in 1975 and it supported a wide range of initiatives. By the late 1980s the government adopted a more explicit community relations policy. Various initiatives, drawn together under the name Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU), were made compulsory as a cross-curricular theme in 1992. On the broader curriculum front, a common history curriculum was introduced in 1990 and a common religious education curriculum in 1993.

Initially, EMU did not enjoy universal support and there were those, on both sides of the divide, who saw it as social engineering driven by a desire to dilute cultural identity. EMU was in many ways a bold initiative that helped to change the nature of discourse in Northern Ireland by introducing a language that 'allows people to express their support for cultural pluralism and political dialogue rather than sectarianism and political violence' (Smith & Robinson, 1996). The recent report entitled *Towards a culture of tolerance: education for diversity* (DENI, 1999) recognized that EMU and other initiatives:

> have had considerable success in breaking down barriers, opening people's minds and establishing new networks of contacts. However, it is not surprising that, in the face of centuries-long social divisions, they must be seen as merely the beginning of social transformation.

An evaluation of EMU carried out by the University of Ulster (UU) identified strengths but also some weaknesses. There was an insufficient focus on human rights and political education. Teachers found EMU to be elusive and

they rarely progressed towards more controversial aspects. This was perhaps because of an insufficiently developed conceptual framework, but also because teachers often felt ill equipped to deal with controversial issues and were afraid of doing more harm than good.

The challenge now is whether such initiatives can help young people move beyond the 'polite exchange' so that they can engage with each other in meaningful discussion of controversial social, cultural, religious and political issues (Smith & Robinson, 1996).

The education system is seeking to move on again, in light of past experience, to find ways of supporting moves towards democracy and to find alternatives both to violence and to the avoidance of discussion of issues that divide us. *Developing the Northern Ireland curriculum* (CCEA, 1999) states the intention to introduce a programme of citizenship education because of the responsibility that the education system has 'to contribute towards the maintenance of peace'.

The Belfast Agreement sharpens the challenge:

The tragedies of the past have left a deep and profoundly regrettable legacy of suffering. We must never forget those who have died or been injured, and their families. But we can best honour them through a fresh start, in which we firmly dedicate ourselves to the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance, and mutual trust, and to the protection and vindication of the human rights of all (Governments of the United Kingdom and Ireland, 1998).

Young people are responding to these challenges. Research (Fearon et al, 1997), has shown that young people in Northern Ireland feel 'alienated from political parties and politicians, but not from politics.' They want to explore controversial issues but recognize that they need the knowledge and skills to do so. Some 79% expressed the desire to learn about politics in school. Yet, more recent research (Smyth et al., 2000) showed that only one-third of the young people surveyed had specific classes in school that addressed such issues as sectarianism.

Currently, radical and far-reaching changes are being proposed to enable the education system to meet the needs of Northern Ireland in the twenty-first century. Other initiatives include a comprehensive review of the Northern Ireland curriculum; of the schools' Community Relations Programme; of the current system of selection at age 11, and of post-primary schooling; and of funding arrangements for schools.

III. THE NORTHERN IRELAND EDUCATION SYSTEM[1]

The Department of Education has overall responsibility for education. The Minister of Education is Martin McGuinness. He is a member of Sinn Fein and for many years, leading unionists have alleged that he is a member of the Army Council of the Irish Republican Army.

The Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) has a statutory responsibility to keep the curriculum under review and to give advice to the Department of Education on all aspects of the curriculum, examinations and assessment, as well as to conduct and moderate examinations and assessment. Responsibility for the local administration of education is devolved to five education authorities—the Education and Library Boards.

Approximately one-third of a million children are in statutory education. The system is segregated both by religion and by ability. Most children attend mainly Protestant 'controlled' or mainly Catholic 'maintained' schools. At the age of 11, a selection process takes place to separate out the more academically able, who attend grammar schools. Grammar schools are also segregated on the basis of religion. There are forty-five integrated schools that cater for 4% of the school population and a small number of Irish-language and other independent schools.

IV. THE CURRICULUM REVIEW

The Northern Ireland Curriculum was introduced in 1990. A review process began in 1998 when the CCEA hosted a series of ten 'Curriculum 21' conferences, to explore recent thinking across a range of educational areas and aimed at fostering debate about the nature of curriculum provision required in the twenty-first Century.

In April 2000, CCEA published a *Consultation document* (CCEA, 2000) on proposals arising from phase one of the review. It stated that the review aimed to provide a curriculum and assessment framework that meets the changing needs of pupils, society, the economy and the environment; it should have the confidence of teachers, pupils, parents, employers and the wider public; and should widen educational opportunity, improve learner motivation and achievement.

It contained proposals for new aims, objectives, values and skills framework; for improved balance, coherence and flexibility at each Key Stage; and for increased curriculum relevance and enjoyment, as well as for specific programmes for personal education, education for employability and citizenship. The citizenship proposal outlines the rationale for the introduction of such a programme, a description of aims, objectives and the main thematic areas.

By the end of the consultation period, in June 2000, some 426 written replies were received from schools, colleges and others. At twenty consultation seminars, approximately 700 teachers had opportunities to voice their opinions. Fifty meetings were held with other stakeholders.

In the *Consultation report* (CCEA, 2001), approval ratings for proposals relating to aims, objectives, values and generic skills were all above 86%. For citizenship, however, the picture was rather different. The overall approval rating for the introduction of a programme of citizenship at Key Stage 3 was only 55.7%; 30% of

respondents were opposed and 14.3% were undecided. However it is particularly interesting that significantly more secondary schools were in favour (65%) than was the case with grammar schools (48.8%), the majority of whom were either against or undecided.

On a more positive note, respondents frequently emphasized the need for a programme that was specific to the needs of Northern Ireland: 'we have a chance to mould, for ourselves in Northern Ireland, a programme that is specific to our needs and aspirations as well as encompassing the broader issues/concepts of democratic citizenship to be found in most liberal democracies' (CCEA, 2001). Respondents also recognized the need for very substantial support if the area was to stand any chance of success: 'We have no specialist teachers—it will not be easy to develop a course that will appeal to pupils and be seen as relevant to their lives'. Other issues mentioned included class size and the need for classes of no more than twenty pupils; and the need to ensure the appropriateness of the course to the pupils' level of maturity.

Of the 30% of respondents who were opposed to the introduction of citizenship, many expressed their opposition in terms of one or more of the following areas:

- *time allocation:* some were concerned about extra time required for citizenship lessons;
- *cross-curricularity:* some argued that it should be integrated into existing teaching areas;
- *content appropriateness:* some argued that the concepts were too abstract and too difficult to deliver;
- *sensitivity:* some saw the matter to be too controversial. Some were supportive but felt 'it would be difficult to implement given the political climate';
- *political appropriateness:* some felt that the programme was based on an underlying political agenda and that this was not a legitimate role for schools.

V. THE SOCIAL, CIVIC AND POLITICAL EDUCATION PROJECT

The University of Ulster School of Education has played an important role in research, development, training and evaluation of initiatives related to pluralism, social justice, democracy, human rights and the teaching of controversial issues. The Social, Civic and Political Education Project (SCPE) has built on this work in the context of the Curriculum Review.

SCPE was initially conceived as a two-year project operating from September 1998. Through a process of curriculum development involving direct engagement and consultation with teachers, the project aimed to produce:

- a curriculum proposal for Key Stage 3;
- a group of trained, committed and knowledgeable teachers;
- a citizenship programme operating in twenty or more post-primary schools;
- guidance material;
- a directory of relevant resources available in print and on the Internet;
- experience to inform the curriculum review.

Twenty-eight schools were selected, representing the main educational sectors in Northern Ireland. The project is currently working with twenty-five schools (about 10% of post-primary schools). Each school nominated a teacher with responsibility for SCPE and a senior management team link to advise on management issues.

In September 2001, the Department of Education secured ministerial approval for an expansion of the pilot accompanied by the largest training programme for a single subject area ever to take place in Northern Ireland. The project was absorbed into the CCEA Curriculum Review Process in January 2002. While the details are not yet finalized, it is likely that approximately seventy schools will join the pilot project in September of each year from 2002 until all schools have been absorbed. Over a three-year period, five teachers from each school will receive seven days of training, including one residential period.

One full-time citizenship officer in each of the five Education and Library Boards will support the expansion. These officers will be trained and supported by project staff. It is anticipated that the citizenship programme will not be made statutory until all schools have participated in piloting for a three-year period. This signals a major shift in the role of the project away from purely developmental work towards implementation.

VI. LOCAL AND GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP PROGRAMME CHARACTERISTICS

The programme developed by the SCPE project is now known as 'Local and Global Citizenship'. As one might expect, the approaches used in Local and Global Citizenship have been heavily influenced by the social and political context of Northern Ireland.

Nick Tate has commented that: 'citizenship education tells one something about what a society feels it stands for and what it wants as a result to transmit through its education system' and that, 'citizenship education moulds itself to the contours of the society within which it is taking place' (Pearce & Hallgarten, 2000). Despite the result of the 1998 referendum on the Agreement, there is often little consensus about the existing or future shape of society in Northern Ireland.

In Northern Ireland there is an emerging democracy, it is fragile and does not enjoy universal support. Consequently, there is no agreed concept of a 'citizen'—and even less of citizenship education. In recent research, (Smyth et al., 2000), 42% of young people questioned in Northern Ireland described their citizenship as Irish, 23% as British and 18% as Northern Irish. There is similar ambivalence to some of the institutions of State, although perhaps the new institutions have greater potential to elicit loyalty.

Like Freire, we have little choice but to have 'an understanding of history as possibility, tomorrow is problematic. In order for it to come, it is necessary that we build it through transforming today. Different tomorrows are possible' (Freire, 1974).

Since neither loyalty to the State nor national identity provide an adequate basis for citizenship in Northern Ireland, 'Local and Global Citizenship' explicitly uses as its values base the international human rights instruments: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, as well as the Northern Ireland Bill of Rights—if and when it is complete and passed into law. It would not be possible, or indeed desirable, for us to draw up a specification for an ideal citizen and use it as a curriculum objective.

David Hargreaves writes that: 'Civic education is about the civic virtues and decent behaviour that adults wish to see in young people. But it is also more than this' (Hargreaves, 1994). In Northern Ireland, I wish to argue that it must be about something other than this. It is much more a dialectical process, which in the words of John Elliot, is about 'the development of society as a community of educated people who feel equally at home in deploying its cultural resources to promote their own and other people's well-being' (Elliot, 1998). Yes, in part, young people are inducted into, what is still, a seriously flawed society, but in part they are encouraged to embark on the process of creating a new and better society. This has far reaching consequences for the programme.

The fact that 'Local and Global Citizenship' asks young people to engage in a process of creating a culture of democracy, as opposed to violence, suggests that learning in this area cannot be individualized. It must, of necessity, be a communal activity. In the first instance, the community is that of the classroom, but it reaches beyond the classroom. This wider community involvement is not without its dangers.

I wish to suggest that this process of communal learning and the negotiated development of a shared culture is not merely a necessity for citizenship education in Northern Ireland, but is in fact good educational practice in any classroom. Jerome Bruner argues that,

> most learning in most settings is a communal activity, a sharing of culture. [...] It is this which leads me to emphasise not only discovery and invention but the importance of negotiating and sharing, in a word, of joint culture creating as an object of schooling and as an appropriate step en route to becoming a member of the adult society in which one lives out one's life. [...] education as an induction into culture must also partake of the spirit of a forum, of negotiation, of the recreating of meaning. [...] this runs counter to traditions of pedagogy that derive from another time, another interpretation of culture, another conception of authority; one that looked at the process of education as a transmission of knowledge and values by those who knew more to those who knew less and *knew it less expertly* (quoted in Elliot, 1998).

Bernard Crick agrees that 'no idea of citizenship can be totally individualized' (Crick, 2000). If learning in this area must be a communal process of negotiation, then a transmissional approach to pedagogy is inappropriate: 'I do not believe that values can be taught—taught directly that is. They must arise from actual or imagined experience if they are to have any meaning' (ibid). As Freire points out for his own context:

> The tradition however has not been to exchange ideas, but to dictate them; not to debate or discuss themes, but to give lectures; not to work with the student, but to work on him, imposing an order to which he has to accommodate. By giving the student formulas to receive and store, we have not offered him the means for authentic *thought* (Freire, 1974).

These realities give us three key characteristics of 'Local and Global Citizenship'. First, it is future orientated. Second, it is based on human rights' principles. Third, it is open-ended. It asks young people to imagine a perfect world in the light of their understanding of human rights principles and then it seeks to help them to narrow the gap between the reality of today and the ideal of their perfect world. In that sense, it aims to be transformative but without being prescriptive about the outcome.

Like CSPE in the Republic of Ireland, the Northern Ireland citizenship programme is based firmly on the principles of active learning. More than that, it is a communal rather than a purely individual process. Its approach is one of free, critical, creative inquiry.

Like both the English and the Irish models, 'Local and Global Citizenship' owes much to T.H. Marshall for its structure. It is built around four thematic areas:

- diversity and inclusion;
- human rights and social responsibilities;
- equality and justice;
- democracy and active participation.

Each of these thematic areas is conceived of as being problematic. It is to be investigated rather than taught didactically. Each is to be investigated in local, national/European and global contexts. The thematic areas are investigated through specific issues, chosen by the teacher and, perhaps even, by students.

'Local and Global Citizenship' begins the investigation of diversity by encouraging young people to see the breadth of diversity in their own community, in national/European and global contexts in terms of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion and so on.

The next step is to explore the challenges of diversity. What feelings are aroused by the sight of an Orange Hall, an Asian on the street, a Roman Catholic Church or two men holding hands in public? How do we deal with difference and the feelings it arouses in us? They are asked to reflect on the opportunities and the struggles that a diverse society presents. Through this reflection, the challenge emerges of how to ensure that our diverse society can also be a just and equitable society.

A study of the nature of human rights and an investigation of various justice issues provides opportunities for young people to clarify and evaluate their own values. Young people are encouraged to negotiate a class 'Bill of Rights' on the understanding that the classroom and the school constitute a learning community. The community explores the needs of its members with the intention of building a fair, effective and enjoyable learning community.

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Rights and values will clash in any society. Young people consider how to handle these conflicts through democratic processes. It then becomes important to consider how, in a diverse society that aspires to be just and equitable, individuals and groups can influence the decision-making process.

The investigation of democratic processes helps young people to see how they can narrow the gap between the world as it is and their ideal world. A sense of realism is important. Young people must be educated for democratic disappointment. However, it is also important that young people have a sense of the possibility of change and an understanding of their potential role in bringing about change.

The investigatory nature of the curriculum is undoubtedly a challenge for teachers in that it asks them to allow the curriculum to develop in the individual classroom to fit the needs and interests within that classroom. They become collaborators in the curriculum development process. Anton Trant's assertion (Trant et al., 1998) that 'curriculum development is really a way of empowering teachers [...] and part of the teacher's own professional development' may well come as news to many teachers of my generation. Curriculum change has often been perceived as burdensome, disempowering and alienating. 'Local and Global Citizenship', however, is seeking to return to teachers some of the professional freedom that was enjoyed by many of us early in our careers, but which has since been seriously eroded. We increasingly recognized the truth of Lawrence Stenhouse's axiom: 'No curriculum development without teacher development' (Stenhouse, 1979). Teachers were often initially quite threatened by the approach, but with adequate support many began to feel valued and to have a sense of ownership of and commitment to the curriculum. A recent evaluation of the project found that: 'the collaborative style of bottom-up development was seen as very affirming of teachers' professional expertise and a model of good practice. It was hoped that this would continue' (Birthistle, 2001).

The programme is designed to be flexible. First, for practical reasons, the structures of government in Northern Ireland are still fragile and it is often unclear from month to month what institutions will be in place. Second, an investigatory or inquiry-based approach is of necessity difficult to plan or predict and requires flexibility. Third, much curriculum change over the last decade in the United Kingdom has been dictated by central government and there has been a perception that consultation exercises were merely cosmetic.

Elliot argues that even after the Dearing Report, educational reforms 'aim to de-professionalize teachers and reduce their role to the status of technicians' (Elliot, 1998). Stuart MacLure, the former editor of the *Times educational supplement,* went further, claiming in 1993 that the Secretary of State for Education expected teachers to 'do anything they are told without question, even if it goes against their professional judgement'. He continues: 'I certainly would not have wanted my children to be taught by compliant teachers with no conscience, nor any ultimate criteria of their own about what is professionally right' (*Times educational supplement*, 22 February 1993, quoted in Elliot, 1998).

In Northern Ireland, as elsewhere, the exploration of identity can be difficult. Often in classroom settings young people are reluctant to express their views honestly. They understand that there are 'politically correct' answers and feel unable to voice more extreme or sectarian views. Such superficial exchanges yield superficial results. A process of relationship- and trust-building is necessary so that young people are given permission to express who they are in the classroom. If their opinions are sectarian or racist, that at least reflects the reality of their lives and opens the way for discussion.

In this kind of enterprise, teachers will meet strong emotional reactions. Rational, critical thinking must of course be encouraged but 'unless the emotional dimension is taken account of, and given expression, then there is a danger that it will dominate any attempt at engagement' (McCully, 1998). This is no less true for the teachers. It is difficult, and arguably undesirable, for teachers to take on the role of a neutral facilitator. It is of central importance that teachers reflect on their own personal biography, and become aware of their own bias. It may be important that they make their class aware of that bias. This may mean that teacher training might 'once more, have to include courses and experiences which enable teachers to identify indoctrination and suppress it in themselves and deny it in others, that is, a shift from teacher training to teacher education' (Allen, 1997).

The challenge to both teachers and young people to explore controversial issues in the classroom is central to the programme and is of particular importance in Northern Ireland. As Barbara Lomas indicated (in Fearon et al., 1997), there is a highly developed 'culture of avoidance':

> The polite way to avert conflict has been simply to avoid controversial issues, or conversations or situations which might prove controversial. Most adults have never been required, or even tried to have a rational and controlled debate over issues about which they feel strongly with someone who feels quite strongly in the other direction.

Lomas goes on to point out that young people are often enthusiastic to debate such issues and that:

> the problem of raising controversial issues lies not with young people but with adults, and in many cases with teachers or youth workers and the senior management of both.

'Local and Global Citizenship' aims to give legitimacy and support to the teacher and the school that chooses to raise such issues. The legitimacy arises from a framework based on research and the experience of teachers and young people. Support in terms of training, resources and

opportunities for the sharing of experience between professional practitioners is essential. If this challenge is not addressed, there is a risk that 'Local and Global Citizenship' will share the weaknesses of EMU without its strengths. It is likely to emerge as a low-status subject delivered in a didactic way by teachers with minimal training.

The 'Local and Global Citizenship' approach demands a great deal of teachers. If they are to teach effectively about human rights, social justice and democracy, the practice of these concepts must find a place in the classroom, otherwise young people are unlikely to be receptive to them or proficient in their exercise. The challenges of 'Local and Global Citizenship' will not be confined to the classroom.

Curriculum developers, in collaboration with teachers and young people, have developed 'Local and Global Citizenship'. It is based on research and practice. It is being thoroughly piloted and offers substantial rewards to teachers in terms of professional development. To young people, it has the potential to offer a new and exciting vehicle for their exploration of civic, social and political issues. In 1994 Vivian McIvor warned:

> I see EMU to be in danger. Have we sanitised it and tamed it too much? Have we made it all far too respectable? I remember having to defend EMU because people were scared of it. Have we taken the tiger out of the tank and neutered it? I want the commitment and the committed back, the spirit and the spirited back, not sanitised, canned, neatly labelled and on the shelf (Smith, 1994).

Perhaps now we have a second chance. Perhaps we have arrived at another defining moment in the education system's response to the conflict. As with EMU, success will depend on many factors, not least the good will and positive commitment of decision-makers within the education system.

Notes

1. For a more comprehensive description of the Northern Ireland education system see: http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/ni/educ.htm

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THE LITHUANIAN EXPERIENCE

Curriculum reform in Lithuania: lessons learned

Virginija Budiene

I. BACKGROUND

With an area of 65,300 km², Lithuania is a part of the economic region known as the Baltic Republics, situated along the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea. Autonomous since 1918, the Lithuanian State came under Soviet occupation in 1940. Although its independence was proclaimed on 11 March 1990, more than a year passed before the country achieved international recognition.

In 1998, the population of Lithuania was 3.7 million with a density of 56.7 inhabitants per square kilometre. The largest city is the capital, Vilnius, with a population of 578,400. Lithuania's ethnic composition is relatively homogeneous with more than 81.6% Lithuanians, 8.2% Russians and 7% Poles. The remaining 3.3% are Byelorussians (1.5%), Ukrainians (1.0%), Jews (0.1%), Tartars (0.1%) and other nationalities (0.6%).

National minorities have the right to teach their children their mother-tongue and national history, and to foster their culture. A language of instruction other than Lithuanian is used in 232 (out of almost 2,000) schools of general education located in ten towns and twenty-three municipal districts. These schools taught 69,777 pupils (12.8% of the total number). In 1996, twenty-eight textbooks were published in Polish, and sixteen in Russian. Schools with national minorities follow the common core curriculum for general education approved by the Ministry of Education and Science, but may supplement it with ethno-cultural elements.

Before 1990, the whole system of education was centralized and formal in management. Lithuanian schools (as well as all schools of the former USSR) were of an autocratic, authoritarian and uniform style. Curriculum and textbooks were written in Moscow and distributed all over the USSR. Uniform teaching and evaluation of student achievement was used for all grades without streaming. Marking was mainly a private matter reserved for the teacher and based on a subjective opinion; aggregating marks across subjects, grades and schools did not happen. National examinations (examination papers prepared centrally, but marked at schools) took place at the end of basic (grade 9) and secondary school (grade 12). The whole set of examinations was compulsory for a student (there were no elective exams). This uniform school required uniform teachers. The General Conception of Lithuanian Education (GC, 1992) put forward new requirements for the teaching profession.

During the last ten years, systemic attempts to revise the curriculum for all subjects and to propose new teaching and assessment methods were made. New curriculum standards for students' achievement have been developed, and a change initiated in teaching methods, instruction and student evaluation, together with the introduction of a teacher appraisal system.

After the restoration of statehood, the adoption of new educational legislation became a priority for the *Seimas* (the Supreme Council). The new 1991 Law on Education provided for substantial changes in aims, content and structure. The aims intended that individuals should acquire knowledge and understanding of the principles of a democratic, pluralistic society, accept humanism and tolerance as basic values, develop independent decision-making skills and acquire professional expertise. They also implied substantial changes in teaching methods, the preparation of new textbooks, and reformed structures for more flexible secondary education. In 1992, the government published a document entitled *The general concept of education in Lithuania*, stating that 'the education system is based on European cultural values: the absolute value of the individual, neighbourly love, innate equality among men, freedom of conscience, tolerance, the affirmation of democratic social relations'. The main principles of Lithuanian education expressed in this document are humanism, democracy, renewal and commitment to Lithuania's culture, together with the preservation of its identity and historic continuity.

II. LESSONS LEARNED DURING THE FIRST TEN YEARS

The lessons learned during the first ten years of the new educational legislation can be summarized as follows:

- Focus on the systemic reform from the very beginning.
- Decide what is your educational philosophy, design a general concept and on this basis prepare system-wide and school-specific year-by-year reform implementation plans.
- Establish the terms for the monitoring of access, equity and quality of education for all.

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- Ensure that access, equity and quality coincide with the educational economy.
- Apply both top-down and bottom-up approaches to the reform (especially as far as middle-level management is concerned).
- Consider the possibilities for sustainability after international donors 'fade-out'.
- Reform will happen only if the teachers implement it.
- Reform will happen only if the school directors support it.
- Do not isolate higher education from the reform since it is here that the new teaching force for the reformed school is being prepared.
- Employ the broad concept of curriculum reform.
- Develop the core curriculum before launching textbook development.
- Decide how textbook authors will be consulted and recruited.
- Develop and publish textbooks on a competitive basis.
- Standards cannot be used if they lack a normative base for the evaluation of student's achievement.
- Be aware about an assessment-driven reform: the wash-back effect—what is assessed is what will be taught.
- Consider the involvement of all educational stakeholders from the beginning—do not make enemies for the reform through lack of consultation.
- Consider management agents for the reform—both public administration and NGOs.
- Avoid complete dependence on donors. You will still be there when they have gone.

III. EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN LITHUANIA AT A GLANCE

Educational reforms fall broadly into the following categories:

- reforms of the structure of the education system;
- revision of educational targets and standards and, consequently, of the curriculum, including the range of teaching methods employed to ensure that emerging individual, social and economic needs will be met;
- reform of both pre-service and in-service teacher education to equip new and existing teachers with the skills to meet these new demands;
- more systematic direction of teacher education, including the introduction of quality standards and quality assurance;
- changes in educational funding mechanisms.

Systemic educational reform became a focus for public debate in Lithuania from 1990 onwards. The Law on Education was adopted in 1991 (with subsequent amendments in 1993, 1994 and 1995).

By far the most important and influential document, however, is the 1992 *General concept of education in Lithuania*, which states that 'the result of education—not the educational process—is centrally controlled'. This philosophy has shaped Lithuania's educational structure and its governance since 1992, and it explains both the extraordinary diversity in Lithuania's schools and the ministry's firm lead concerning the national curriculum, educational standards and the assessment of quality.

The general concept of education in Lithuania (1992) sets out fundamental guidelines for the reform of the education system. Following its approval by the government, it was the basis for the implementation of reform since then.

The lessons we have learned are that the focus should be on systemic reform. The design should first obtain the approval of society and its governing institutions. The education reform strategy or general concept of the reform should be accompanied by short-, medium- and long-term implementation plans in order to have a clear direction and focus. In this way it can be protected from ideological and philosophical discrepancies.

IV. CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT REFORMS

As with the other education systems of Central and Eastern Europe, Lithuanian education has been excellent at producing an elite of first-class mathematicians, physicists and engineers. However, it must now re-examine that goal in the light of the broader and more complex demands of modern economies and modern democracies. Present needs relate more to adaptability to the speed of change and lifelong learning within an often-unstable context. The new concept of an education of quality requires redefinition in these new and changing times. A re-focusing of goals and resources is indicated. But such a change is not necessarily attractive for all stakeholders. It is particularly difficult to move on from a system that has been successful in meeting the challenges of a former world. But the quality of one age is the obsolescence of the next.

1. Pre-school education

The basic aim of pre-school education is to assist in the development of a child's personality and impart the fundamental skills needed for life in society. For this purpose, it follows two new national programmes: *The guidelines for pre-school education: a curriculum for teachers and parents* (1993); and the 1993 kindergarten programme *Vërinëlis (The string)*. While both pursue the same goals, their methods differ. *The guidelines for pre-school education* use integrated education, whereas *The string* is based on a creative method. Instead of a curriculum divided into separate subjects, various activities conducive to a child's development are integrated, including language, general awareness, art, music, games, crafts and acting.

Pre-school education has been supported by two international projects, namely the *Democratization of the pre-school education system* launched by the Open Society Fund-Lithuania and Egmont Peterson (Denmark) in 1992, and *Step by step*, another Open Society Fund project started in 1994. The first involves thirty-two pre-school establishments and primary-school-type kindergartens,

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and the second twenty-two institutions. Provision in all of them follows *The guidelines for pre-school education*, with emphasis on the principles of a humanistic education, and use of a distinctive methodology. Both projects have brought about favourable changes in teacher-training institutions and resulted in the publication of books on teaching methods.

2. Compulsory education/training

Article 19 of the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania stipulates that education is compulsory for all pupils up to the age of 16 (inclusive). Article 4 of the Law (as revised), which came into force on 29 July 1998, stipulates that basic (lower secondary) school should last six years (replacing the former five-year basic school). Thus, compulsory education now involves four years of primary education followed by six years of basic (lower secondary) education (ten years in all). Compulsory education is provided not only in publicly maintained schools of general education, but in private schools that receive State support if they adopt the national curriculum. However, enrolment in the latter is still limited.

Primary schools constitute the first level of compulsory schooling made up of the first to fourth forms, and initially admit children aged between 6 and 7.

3. Primary education

The general aim of primary schools is to prepare for the development of an educated, independent and active personality. It seeks to do so by the following means:

- creating conditions conducive to the growth of each child's individuality;
- imparting the basics of culture (intellectual, aesthetic, ethical);
- imparting knowledge and fostering the ability to analyse and interpret it;
- developing all ways of acquiring learning that are relevant to a person's life, and his or her relations with society at large.

Primary education is part of the obligatory period of education and is free. All primary schools follow a common State-approved core curriculum and plan for teaching. Pupils receive free textbooks, but have to buy their own exercise books. Teachers are provided with teaching manuals. A variety of contrasting textbooks on music have already been published, and alternative sources are being similarly prepared for mathematics. Prior to each school year, the Ministry of Education and Science presents schools with sets of recommended textbooks from which teachers are free to select those they prefer.

Provision of primary education follows the 1992 *General curriculum framework for primary school* approved by the Ministry of Education and Science. The curriculum of compulsory subjects includes moral education (parents may choose whether their children receive religious instruction relevant to a given denomination, or lessons in ethics), the Lithuanian language, perception and understanding of the world, mathematics, fine arts and crafts, music, physical training and one foreign language (English, German or French).

Educational provision is based on the selection by each school of one of four teaching plans proposed by the Ministry. The *Curriculum framework* does not prescribe the weekly number of lessons (periods) per subject, but this is listed in the plans. In the first year of primary education, lessons last thirty-five minutes. In the second to fourth forms, they may last thirty-five, forty or forty-five minutes, depending on the teaching plan chosen.

In addition to the compulsory subjects referred to above, certain others are optional. Both categories are allocated a given number of lessons by the ministry, whose precise schedule is at the discretion of the school. Subject to slight variations depending on the teaching plan, forms 1 to 4 are assigned one lesson each week on moral education, seven or eight for Lithuanian, two in perception and understanding of the world, four or five in mathematics, three in fine arts, crafts, music and physical education, and two or three in a foreign language.

Teachers themselves have some say in how several subjects are scheduled. The teaching plans state that the optional subject of a foreign language can only be included as early as the second form if it is to be taught intensively in accordance with an officially approved programme, or individual syllabus, of a school (*individualioji programa*).

Although primary school pupils do not take any examinations, their progress is assessed on a continuous basis, and reported to their parents. If marks are used, a ten-point system is employed, with a final mark at the end of every term and school year. Between one to three marks is felt to be unsatisfactory, and the pupils concerned are considered not to have passed, or to be 'non-certified'. However, primary school councils may decide that marks should not be used for pupil assessment.

4. Lower secondary education

On completion of primary education (forms 1 to 4), pupils move on to basic school (*pagrindinė mokykla*) for their lower secondary education, corresponding to forms 5 to 9 (soon to be 10 as discussed above). Basic schools thus normally cover the 10-16 age-group. They may be autonomous or operate in conjunction with a primary school or be part of a secondary school catering for both upper and lower levels.

When pupils complete this level of education, they are awarded a basic school-leaving certificate. The National Centre of Examinations governs school-leaving examinations and the level of attainment is noted on the certificate.

The aim of all types of basic education (youth schools, boarding schools, schools of special education) is to cater for the needs of pupils of different ages, abilities and aptitudes, while creating favourable conditions for the education of young people whose motivation also differs.

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Pending transition to the six-year basic school, teaching plans for the five-year system were used. The plans set out both the compulsory (core) subjects and optional subjects, as well as the number of lessons per subject per week (see Table 1). At basic school level (forms 5 to 9), the total number of lessons is between twenty-seven and thirty-one.

The sixteen compulsory subjects are moral education (religion or ethics), the Lithuanian language, two foreign languages, mathematics, nature and man, biology, physics, chemistry, history, civics, geography, art, music, crafts and physical training. These subjects are studied by all pupils, but may be allocated a variable number of lessons.

TABLE 1. The weekly distribution of lessons for compulsory subjects at basic school

Subject \ Form	5		6		7		8		9	
1. CURRICULUM SUBJECTS										
Moral education (religion or ethics)	1		1		1		1		1	
A. LANGUAGES										
Lithuanian language	5-6	1*	5-6		5-6		4-5		5	
Foreign language (1st)	3-4		3		3		3		3	
Foreign language (2nd)	-		2-3		2-3		2-3		2-3	
Elective subjects	-		-		-		-		-	
B. NATURAL SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS										
Mathematics	4-5		4-5		4-5		4		4	
Nature and man	2		2		-		-		-	
Biology	-		-		2		1-2		2	1*
Physics	-		-		1		2		2	
Chemistry	-	3*	-	2*	-	2*	2	3*	2	
Elective subjects	-		-		-		-		-	
C. SOCIAL SCIENCES										
History	2		2		1,5-2	0,5*	2		2	
Basics of civic society	-		-		0,5-0		1-2		-	
Geography	-		2		2		1-2		2	
D. FINE ARTS AND CRAFTS, PHYSICAL TRAINING										
Fine arts	1		1		1		1		1	
Music	1		1		1		1		1	
Crafts	2		2		2		2		1-2	
Physical training	2-3		2-3		2-3		2-3		2-3	
Civil safety, traffic safety	-		-		-		-		-	
Elective subjects	-		-		-		-		-	
Overall: for a five-day school week	23		27		28		28		30	
Number of lessons distributed at the school's discretion*	4		2		2		3		1	
Maximum number of compulsory lessons for a five-day school week	27		29		30		31		31	

In line with the general concept of the reform, the new National Core Curriculum was developed, discussed and adopted. The curriculum reform reached grade 9 in the 2000/2001 school year (see Table 2). Most needed textbooks were developed and published (Table 3) according to new National Core Curriculum—'General Curriculum for General Education School in Lithuania' (project dating from 1994, adopted in1997). Teachers are free to choose their *teaching methods*. Although teachers are recommended by the new school philosophy to use active teaching methods, traditional lessons still prevail. Among the recommended methods are discussions, teamwork, modelling, 'brain-storming', projects, experimentation and out-of-school assignments. Integrated instruction and methods, geared to the needs of individual pupils, are all actively promoted.

5. Post-compulsory upper secondary school

Students leaving compulsory school can continue their studies in one of the following institutions: secondary schools, gymnasia, vocational schools, as well as some boarding and special education schools. With the transition from the five-year to six-year basic school, upper secondary education is currently offered in the last three years of schooling (forms 10 to 12). In public educational institutions, this education is free of charge.

The main aim of upper secondary education is to enable pupils to enter any type of college or university-level higher education establishment. Gymnasiums cover the last four years of secondary education. Pupils are admitted according to school criteria, particularly as regards performance, maturity and motivation. Traditionally, gymnasiums provide a more advanced level of education to academically inclined pupils than that of other secondary schools. They offer them the opportunity to choose between various branches of study, including humanities, science and fine arts. Gymnasium school-leavers are encouraged to enter university-level higher education institutions.

Plans establish compulsory (core) subjects and optional ones, together with the number of lessons for each per week. At upper secondary level the total number of forty-five-minute lessons is thirty-two.

The intention now is to simplify Lithuania's complex 'triple' upper secondary system (general secondary schools + gymnasia + professional secondary) into a 'dual' one, offering: (1) comprehensive 'academic' gymnasia, with profiles in the humanities, sciences, technology and arts; and (2) non-academic technical gymnasia offering professional profiles in technical and arts subjects. *All* upper secondary schools will thus become 'gymnasia', in a far more comprehensive sense than is now the case. This transformation is expected to be complete by 2010, with an intermediate stage (up to 2005), during which the present 'triple' structure will continue, but all three existing school types will introduce profiled curricula.

The first phase of structural reforms (1998–2005) is—temporarily—leading to even greater complexity. A number of basic questions still need to be resolved. What will be the feasibility of profiling in small rural schools? Will these schools really be able to offer students the range of choice implied in profiling? Will profiling really reduce and focus the workload for students—as is intended? If all upper secondary schools (including technical ones) become gymnasia, what provision will be made to serve students in the lower 25% of the ability range? What will be the impact of the move to compulsory grade 10 for vocational education (e.g. must three- and four-year vocational programmes be redesigned as two- and three-year ones)?

TABLE 2. Curriculum reform 1998–2004

2003-2004								Grade 12
2002-2003							Grade 11	
2001-2002					Grade 11	Grade 10		
2000-2001				Grade 11	Grade 9			
1999-2000		Grade 12	Grade 10	Grade 8				
1998-1999	Grade 11		Grade 7					

	Grades participating in profiling experiment
	Grades in transitional period
	Grades already reformed

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TABLE 3. Publication of textbooks (grades 1-12) 1991–99

Year	No. of titles. Total, all grades[1]	Of these:				New titles all grades	Of these:				Books (000)	MoES cost in litas (000)
		Lith.	Russ.	Pol.	Special		Lith.	Russ.	Pol.	Special		
1991	93	67	2	20	4	38	22	1	12	3	2 100	795
1995	111	61	16	28	6	71	39	11	16	5	2 600	9 500
1998	117	79	16	17	5	74	43	12	14	5	1 305.7	15 700
1999	177	135	19	14	9	60	29	13	9	9	1 106.3	13 540

At upper secondary level, pupil assessment is once again essentially based on a 10-point system, as described earlier for basic education. On completion of the full twelve years of secondary school, a school-leaving (maturity) certificate is awarded, stipulating the examinations passed, their level and the points assessment, as well as giving similar information on all subjects for the end of the twelfth school year or the year the course in a subject has been completed. School-leaving certificates entitle their holders to enter any Lithuanian higher education institution, vocational school or college.

In theory, the national curriculum (*General curriculum for the general education school in Lithuania*) allows teachers some flexibility to develop and deliver their own curricula; it was said that as much as 20 to 30% of the curriculum (i.e. hours on the timetable) could be school-specific. In practice, however, timetables do not appear to offer much freedom. Many teachers find it difficult to cover the compulsory core content in the time available; moreover, they have little experience in curriculum development, and the impression is that teachers get little support either from the school inspectorate or from in-service training to make the best use of whatever flexibility the tight timetables allow. Although essential reforms of the school structure have taken place, they were not supported by new textbooks for profiled schools. According to the curriculum reform plan, this is only planned to take place in the future. This problem creates discrepancies at the upper-secondary school level.

6. Insights

Is each school effective in cultivating those skills and dispositions central to our new educational goals? This question presents significant challenges for curriculum designers. The time has gone when a curriculum could be simply a description of the path through fields of knowledge. Now, a curriculum must reflect the demands not only of the fields of knowledge, but also the field of skills and capabilities, and—with increasing importanceæon the field of human qualities and dispositions. And this, in turn, emphasizes the importance of teachers understanding the complexity of the task of teaching and the relationship between how they act in the classroom and the lessons the young people really learn. It is no longer sufficient—if it ever was—for teachers simply to be masters of their subjects and to be the sources of insight and truth.

V. THE BROAD CONCEPT OF CURRICULUM

The major developments of educational reform in Lithuania occurred in the field of curriculum development. The new philosophy of the Lithuanian school was introduced in the new core curriculum—*General curriculum for the general education school in Lithuania*. The new curriculum for basic school introduced not only the new broad guidelines for subject teaching, but also new subjects e.g. civic education, moral education, etc. The holistic child-development approach was introduced. Changing society requires from its citizens new skills and a re-definition of the concept of what constitutes 'an educated citizen': a self-motivated person with the ability to think, solve problems, and use higher-order intellectual skills to process information and make informed decisions. The new curricula and standards seek to strike a balance between the quantity of necessary knowledge on the one hand, and the acquisition of intellectual, social and civic 'fluency' on the other. Similar moves are being made in vocational and professional education, where diminishing needs for narrowly trained specialists have shifted the focus to more general working skills applicable to a range of occupations.

Curriculum policy for Lithuania is defined centrally by the General Education Department of the Ministry of Education and Science, with professional support from expert panels and subject specialists in the Institute of Pedagogy (*Pedagogikos Institutas*). Curriculum guides outline the objectives for the subject by grade, a description of the content to be taught, time allocations for each subject (lessons per week), and expected learning outcomes. Curriculum renewal is seen as an ongoing task, and efforts are made to co-ordinate new curricula with the introduction of new textbooks, new teaching methods, methods of diagnostic and summative assessment, and teacher pre- and in-service training.

TABLE 4. An understanding of curriculum reform

Intended curriculum: the desired situation; policy, 'standards'	**Delivered** curriculum: classroom teaching, textbooks, hours	**Attained** curriculum: what the student actually learns

1. Lessons learned

We argue that, for the successful implementation of the reform, *the compatibility of curriculum, teaching methods and student assessment and evaluation should be achieved.* This means that the broad concept of curriculum reform should be employed.

For better success still, the link between the revision of curricula and the development of appropriate textbooks, teaching aids, teaching methodologies and teacher training should be strengthened.

VI. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The first full set of these curriculum guides was published in 1997 under the title 'General curriculum for general education school in Lithuania' (*Lietuvos Bendrojo Lavinimo Mokyklos Bendrosios Programos*) and is gradually being revised in a 'rolling' plan that has reached grade 8 and is expected to be completed through grade 12 in 2003–04 (see Table 2).

Little attention (though highly recommended in the documents) is given to the learning of core skills, and in particular skills related to entrepreneurship, learning to learn, languages and information technology, which could be useful for basic school graduates to be successful in life, participate actively in the labour market and pursue lifelong learning.

1. Lessons learned

Teacher's attitudes and beliefs change slowly, and they hardly ever implement someone else's reform. If success is to be achieved, there is a need for teachers to be thoroughly acquainted with the reform and to acquire a feeling of 'ownership'.

For basic schools and general secondary schools, national curricula were revised and 'de-ideologized' immediately after the restoration of Lithuania's independence. New types of educational programmes were drawn up allowing schools themselves to control between 20% and 30% of the time allocated for each grade and for each subject's timetable. The curricula were intended as guidelines rather than prescriptions. The revival of (selective, prestigious) gymnasiums and lyceums with an academic emphasis is a common feature of nearly all Central and Eastern European countries, where they represent an old tradition associated with academic excellence and quality. The wish for choice and differentiation is understandable after decades of Soviet uniformity. Since the end of the Second World War, however, many Western European countries have opted for comprehensive secondary schooling (e.g. the United Kingdom and Norway). The Council of Europe, too, has taken a stand against early selection and segregation because they are considered to be socially divisive and force students to make irreversible choices before their capabilities and interests are fully developed.

Nevertheless, gymnasium education is increasingly in demand in Lithuania, and it does provide academically inclined young people with a broad range of subjects. The movement to broaden differentiation and choice, and 'optimising' provision by consolidating schools are to some extent in opposition to each other. They are creating some turbulence in the system that will not be resolved until the end of the second reform phase in 2010.

Nostalgia, the basis of the movement in favour of selective gymnasiums, has resulted in unequal access to quality educational opportunities for all students. It will now cost much money and a lot of effort to reconvert all secondary schools into general gymnasiums.

VII. STANDARDS

General education standards, in draft form, have been developed following the adoption of legal documents regulating education and the conceptual provisions of educational reform.

Article 31 of the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania provides for the Ministry of Education and Science 'to establish public standards of general education for various education levels'. Article 36 of the same Law provides for the State to support non-governmental schools if they provide their students with an education corresponding to the public standards.

Standards are also provided for in other educational documents. In discussing the management of education, 'The educational concept of Lithuania' stresses that the school is responsible for 'the implementation of educational standards established by the State', and the Government (Ministry of Education and Science) is responsible for 'establishing public education standards and control of their implementation'. 'The general curriculum for general education school in Lithuania' also specifies public general education standards as a factor for integrating and reflecting educational content. The creation of public general education standards is a particularly important step in implementing the general education reform in Lithuania stipulated by the principal educational reform provisions and legally documented. But the standards lack a normative base for evaluation of each student's achievement.

VIII. NEW TEACHING MATERIALS

The development of textbooks and other supplementary teaching materials has been one of the most successful parts of the reforms in general education over the past ten years. Textbook development competitions were announced and resulted in the publication of new textbooks in almost all subject areas for all grades. New teaching aids require new teaching and learning approaches. The introduction and efficient use of published textbooks in instruction is still limited due: (a) to the limited integration of new educational approaches during initial and in-service teacher-training programmes; (b) to the lack of financial resources both for schools and students to buy books; and (c) to the inability for teachers to attend training courses.

1. Lessons learned

- Develop the core curriculum before launching textbook development.
- Decide how textbook authors will be consulted.
- Develop and publish textbooks on a competitive basis.

IX. ASSESSMENT AND EXAMINATION REFORM

It is widely acknowledged that reform of an assessment system can be used to reinforce changes made in the curriculum and to promote new and better ways of learning and delivering teaching programmes in the classroom. As a result, many educational reform programmes incorporate simultaneous changes to both the curriculum and assessment. New assessment approaches in primary grades were introduced based on non-marking/ideographic evaluation. Further developments on decreasing subjectivism and selectivity in day-by-day marking system are under consideration. A more formative nature of daily assessment is being introduced. New assessment approaches requires changes in teacher beliefs and the teaching culture. These changes should be considered during initial teacher training.

The new national examination system for graduation from upper secondary education is being introduced. Until 1999, most universities required prospective students to take university entrance exams. The results of these, together with the student's average mark from all school-leaving exams, were used for university entrance. After 1999, when the National Examination Centre introduced new State school-leaving examinations, universities started using them in place of their own entrance exams. The results of State examinations are also used for entrance to teacher-training programmes.

X. TEACHERS' AND SCHOOL MANAGERS' APPRAISAL

The system of teacher appraisal is aimed at maintaining the quality of teaching throughout the working career of the teachers. In order to confirm their qualifications to teach in the reformed school or to obtain a higher level of qualifications, teachers have to undergo a process of appraisal, which consists of taking courses, undergoing observation lessons, carrying out home projects, etc.

There are five categories of teacher qualification in Lithuania, and each higher category leads to a certain salary increase. The new system of appraisal was introduced in the early 1990s, but a rather similar system existed before the collapse of the communist regime. The earlier system used to be rather formal, while the new system was supposed to be more flexible in this sense. However, critics say that not very much has changed.

In order to ensure the quality of management in education, a system of head-teacher appraisal was introduced in 1993. There are three pay-related qualification categories in the appraisal scheme. Groups of experts who make site visits and observations appraise head-teachers and deputies. They also analyse the relevant school documents: yearly accounts, development plans, etc.

Systems of teacher and head-teacher appraisal were seriously affected by the 1999 Lithuanian economic crisis. Local governments stopped paying supplements for higher qualifications among teachers and school principals; as a result, the Lithuanian educational community started to question the very idea of appraisal.

The need for increased competence can be achieved by a planned effort to build up sustainable competence in this field within Lithuania itself. Until the present time, Lithuanian higher-education institutions do not provide initial training for educational administrators—neither at the undergraduate, nor at the graduate levels.

1. Lessons learned

Reform will happen only if the teachers accept to implement it. It is necessary to consider the ambitions common to human nature and to acknowledge everyone's need for self-achievement. Ways of applying pressure and measures supporting the reforms should be integrated into the system.

Education and social inclusion in Lithuania

Pranas Gudynas

I. DEFINING SOCIAL INCLUSION

The issue of social cohesion of different communities and social groups in Lithuania has been traditionally given considerable attention. To achieve a balanced social and economic development, an increasing number of reasons for social exclusion have been identified and investigated; ways of eliminating them have been sought. The term *social inclusion*, however, has been under-used in official documents and political discussions, together with the term *social cohesion*. To describe situations referring to the demand for social inclusion, terms such as *social integration*, *social isolation* and *social vulnerability* are most commonly encountered; the term *social exclusion* is used less often. This may be explained by the fact that the Lithuanian language does not have a convenient equivalent for the English term *social inclusion*. Thus, the term *social exclusion* has become increasingly used in Lithuanian to describe situations in which the participation of certain social groups in social, cultural, economic and political processes is limited.

Despite this absence of a specific Lithuanian term to refer to what in English is called *social inclusion*, the goal of creating an open, just and undivided society has been systematically pursued; a society where everyone would be able to enjoy equal rights, freedoms and social services, such as education, health care, housing and employment. It may be stated that social inclusion and social cohesion are among the top priority goals of the State. However, these goals are not easy to achieve in times of rapid social change, increasing material inequality, high unemployment and negative impact of the globalization process.

II. VULNERABLE SOCIAL GROUPS AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION

There is a growing awareness in Lithuania of the fact that an inadequately organized or poorly functioning system of formal education increases the social and economic divide, and the social exclusion of certain groups. On the other hand, an education system based on the principles of democracy and offering quality services can significantly contribute to the promotion of social inclusion.

To ensure accessibility and quality of educational services in Lithuania, special attention has traditionally been paid to ethnic minorities, rural populations, women, and people with physical and/or mental disabilities. Recent processes, however, such as changes in social relations, the arrival of the information society and globalization, have presented new challenges to education and have made us search for new ways of meeting the educational demands of the groups under discussion.

With changes in the realities of life and social relations, other educationally vulnerable groups are coming into focus. These are: the unemployed; young people who have dropped out of school; senior citizens; refugee children; and children of itinerant working parents. Their educational needs will require increasing attention, additional resources and new ways of providing educational services.

In any analysis of the impact of education on social cohesion, it is important to focus not only on the most vulnerable social groups, but also on certain internal factors that can undermine equal educational opportunities. Some of the major factors here are: educational content that is too academic; too little attention paid to life skills; a relatively low ratio of pupils completing basic education (within their age group); selectivity exercised by the education system; unequal learning conditions between rural and urban areas; relatively isolated schools for ethnic minorities; the insecurity of ethnic minorities with regard to educational reforms; and poor provision of information technologies.

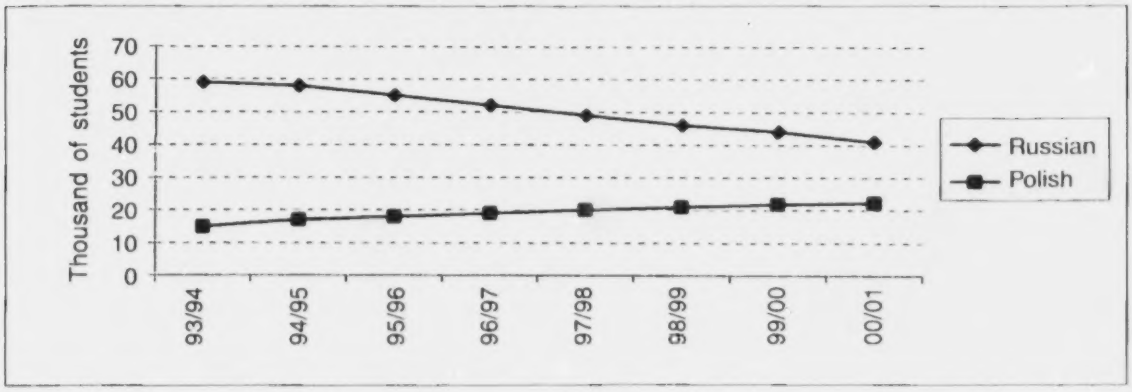
III. THE EDUCATIONAL SITUATION

We now present a short overview of some educational indicators that describe the educational situation of certain social groups and the impact of some major risk factors on educational inequality.

1. The educational situation of ethnic minorities

In the first half of 1999, the ethnic composition of the population of Lithuania was as follows: 81.8% were Lithuanian; 8.1%, Russian; 6.9%, Polish; 1.4%, Byelorussian; 1.0%, Ukrainian; 0.1%, Jewish; 0.7%, other. Thus, the non-Lithuanian population comprised 18.2% of the total. The majority of the non-Lithuanian population live in eastern and south-eastern Lithuania, as well as in the towns of Vilnius, Klaipeda and Visaginas.

FIGURE 1. The dynamics of the pupil population in Russian and Polish schools.



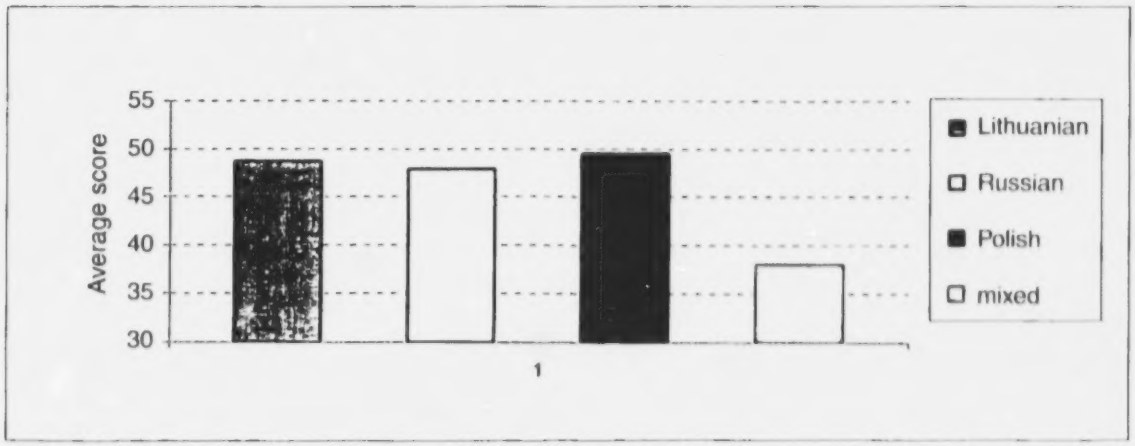
According to the Lithuanian Law of Education (25 June 1991), in the areas populated by ethnic minorities, conditions should be provided for minority children to receive State or non-State pre-school and comprehensive/secondary education in their native language. On these grounds, ethnic minority comprehensive/secondary schools are allowed to operate in Lithuania with a language of instruction other than Lithuanian. In 2000/01, there were 213 ethnic minority schools with 63,679 pupils comprising 10.9 % of the total school population. Russian schools enrolled 41,162 (7.0%) pupils; Polish, 22,303 (3.8%); and Byelorussian, 214 (0.04%). A few ethnic minorities—Polish, Byelorussian, Ukrainian, German, Jewish, Armenian, Karaim and Tatar—also have their own religious instruction schools, known as Sunday schools.

Recently, there has been a steady decrease in the pupil population in the Russian schools, and a steady increase in the Polish schools (Figure 1). The total non-Lithuanian pupil population in schools with non-Lithuanian instructional language has been decreasing, whereas the total non-Lithuanian pupil population in schools with Lithuanian instructional language has been increasing. The reason for this is the parents' wish to educate their children in schools with instruction in Lithuanian in order for them to integrate into the social and cultural life of Lithuania.

The quality of teaching and learning in ethnic minority schools has not been carefully investigated, however, indirect evidence suggests that, in general, it is similar to Lithuanian schools. This is confirmed by the final examinations and university entrance results. For example, the results of the final examination in mathematics in 2000 had no significant correlation with the language of instruction (Figure 2).

The existence of separate ethnic minority schools with instruction in non-Lithuanian languages helps to maintain ethnic identity and create conditions in which ethnic groups feel more secure. There is, however, in this situation a certain danger of social division: The young generation has fewer opportunities to learn to live together with representatives of other ethnic groups and to learn Lithuanian.

FIGURE 2. The results of the State examination in mathematics in 2000 across different language schools (average score).



2. The problems of rural education

Considerable efforts have been made to create learning conditions for pupils in rural areas comparable to those for pupils in towns. The process of educational reform (the transition from a nine-year to a ten-year basic school; the introduction of profiled education in grades 11 and 12; the restructuring of the network of schools) involves qualitative changes in the services offered by schools in rural areas.

There are concrete reasons why qualitative changes are difficult to achieve. Rural schools are small (Table 1): the average number of pupils in a rural school is much lower than that in an urban school (Table 2). Therefore, the cost of education in the countryside is much higher than in the town. Rural schools are much less well equipped: they have fewer computers; they have fewer specialized classrooms for biology, chemistry or physics; and they have poorer physical training facilities or dining halls. Rural schools also have less-qualified teachers (Table 3); as a rule, in countryside schools one teacher teaches a number of subjects, for which he/she is not always qualified.

Little research has been conducted on qualitative differences between education in rural and urban areas. The scarce existing data suggests that the achievement of pupils in rural schools is lower than that of pupils in urban schools. This difference can be largely explained by the fact that the level of parent education in rural areas is lower than that in towns. The results of the Matura examinations in mathematics and history are interesting in this respect. Table 4 shows that out of the three factors (gender, urban/rural and type of school—for an explanation of 'type of school', see section 8 below), the most significant factor that has the biggest impact on the examination results is type of school, whereas the urban/rural factor is relatively insignificant. This evidence seems to support the claim that the qualitative educational differences between urban and rural schools are insignificant.

3. Gender differences in education

Recently, there has been more public discussion about equal rights between men and women. These discussions, however, do not seem to cover equal educational rights, since the main attention has been focused on the issues of career opportunities and management at different levels. The main educational indicators show that women and men in Lithuania have equal educational opportunities, both in law and in reality.

TABLE 1. Average number of pupils per school, State schools (at the beginning of the school year)

	Lithuania as a whole			Rural areas		
	1997/98	**1998/99**	**1999/2000**	**1997/98**	**1998/99**	**1999/2000**
All comprehensive/ secondary schools	238	243	251	86	89	93
Primary	45	48	49	21	22	22
Youth	94	95	111	82	95	128
Lower secondary	104	108	117	95	97	104
Upper secondary	610	623	639	261	270	283

TABLE 2. Average number of pupils per class (1999/2000).

Urban schools	Rural schools	Total
22.9	13.8	19.6

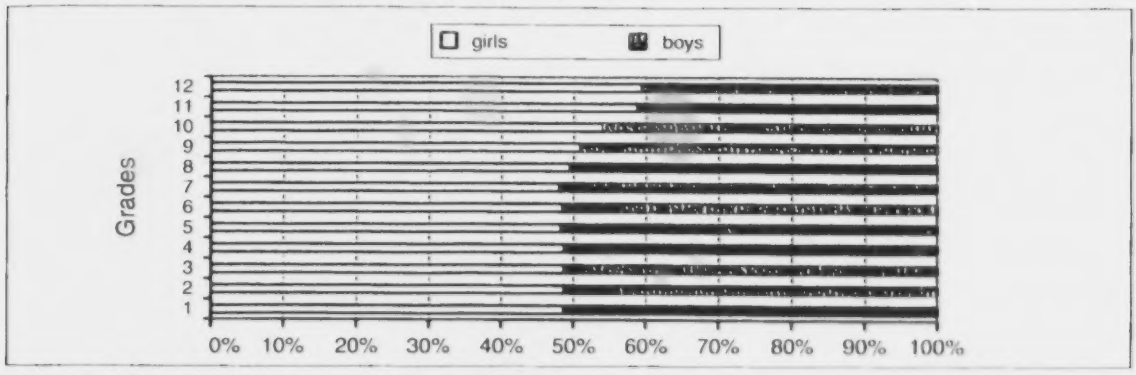
TABLE 3. Educational level of comprehensive/secondary schoolteachers, % (2000/01).

Education:	Town	Country
Higher	90.4%	79.8%
College	8.2%	16.8%
Secondary	1.4%	3.4%

TABLE 4. The impact of group factors (gender urban/rural, and type of school) on the results of the Matura examinations 1999.

	Matura examination	
Group factor	**Mathematics**	**History**
Gender (female/male)	0,000	0,002
Urban/rural	0,069	0,035
Type of school	0,344	0,295

FIGURE 3. Gender ratio at secondary school (1999/2000)



At secondary level, up until grade 8, there is a good gender balance in terms of numbers of pupils (Figure 3), whereas in grades 11 and 12 the ratio of female students reaches 60%. If we focus on gymnasium schools, we see that the ratio of female pupils is even higher: 61.9% in grade 1; 60.4% in grade 2; 62.4% in grade 3; and 61.7% in grade 4.

This increase in the number of female pupils at the secondary level could be explained by an analysis of the academic record results: the TIMSS investigation has shown that average marks of male pupils in grades 7 and 8 at secondary level were much worse in mathematics and natural sciences than female pupils' marks, although the overall findings of the test did not show significant differences between male and female pupils.

Table 5 shows that female students outnumber male students, not only at the gymnasium level but also at the college level and in further education. Only at vocational schools is the male student population bigger. Thus, we see that females are more likely to follow an academic career, whereas males are more inclined to take up vocational training.

The majority of teaching staff at all educational institutions are also female, with the exception of universities (Table 6). This may be an important factor influencing the decision of male students to leave comprehensive school in forms 7 to 9.

Research suggests that the academic record of female students is similar to that of male students. An illustration could be given of the results of the 1999 final examination in mathematics and history. Figure 4 shows that the difference between the results of female and male students was relatively insignificant.

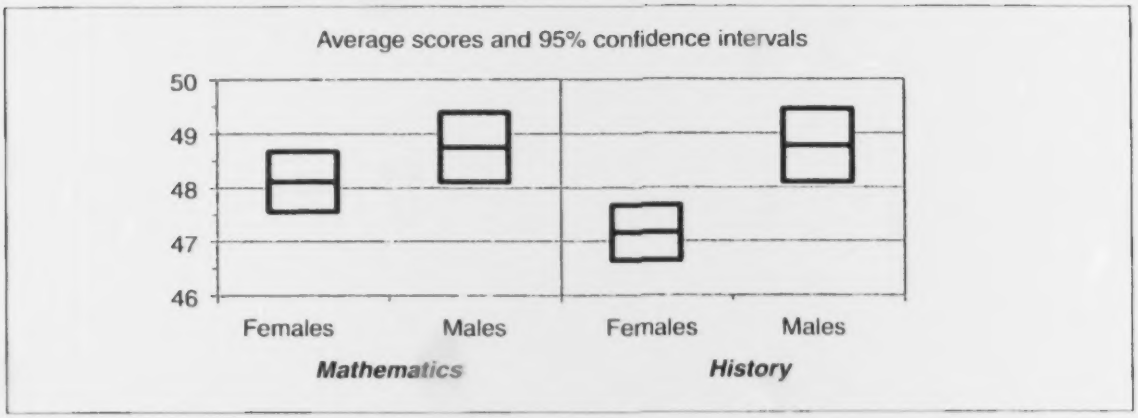
TABLE 5. The percentage of female students at educational institutions (2000/01).

	Total pupils/students	**Female**	
		Total no.	**%**
Comprehensive/secondary	603,824	299,252	49.6
Vocational	47,005	18,892	40.2
Further education	37,378	23,939	64.0
Colleges	3,547	2,189	61.7

TABLE 6. Teaching staff (2000/01)

	Teaching staff, thousands	**Female, %**	**Male, %**
Comprehensive/secondary	51.9	85	15
Vocational	4.9	65	35
Further education	4.3	68	32
Higher education	9.4	43	57
Total	**70.4**	**77**	**23**

FIGURE 4. Matura examination results (1999)



4. Meeting special education needs

The first special education school was opened in Lithuania in 1805. In Soviet times, the idea of separate schools for children with special needs was promoted, which led to the isolation of this social group. The restoration of independence and the introduction of the educational reform have stimulated a revival of comprehensive education, together with special education. One of the priorities of the second stage of the educational reform is to create equal opportunities for all children. To implement this principle, a new Special Education Law was adopted in 1998.

FIGURE 5. Number of pupils with intellectual disabilities in special boarding schools

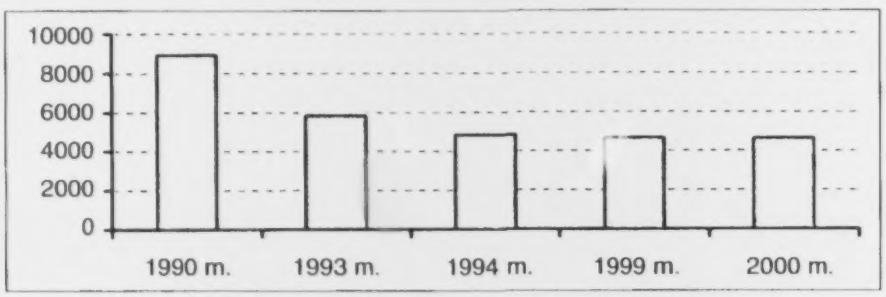
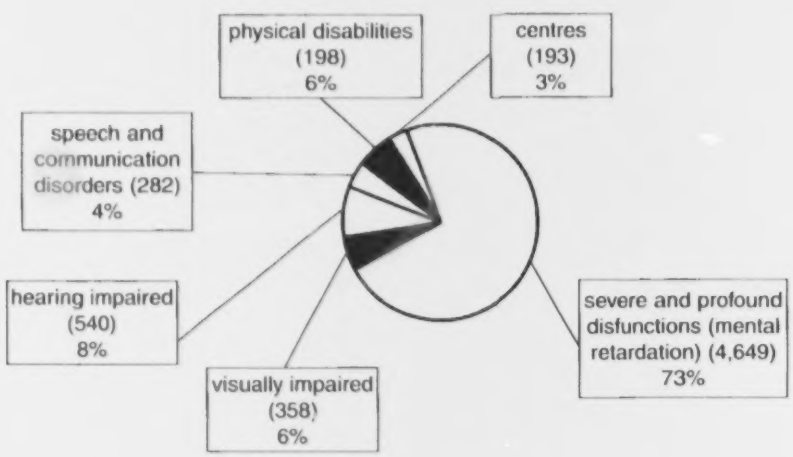


FIGURE 6. Types of special boarding schools and the number of students


physical disabilities (198) 6%
centres (193) 3%
speech and communication disorders (282) 4%
hearing impaired (540) 8%
visually impaired (358) 6%
severe and profound disfunctions (mental retardation) (4,649) 73%

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The integration of children with special needs into comprehensive schools (as well as other types of school) requires huge investments and highly qualified teachers. With limited financial resources, these requirements have not been easy to fulfil. The 1999 Programme for the Creation of Social and Pedagogic Conditions for Learning gives a highly critical evaluation of the current situation:

> The State at the present moment is not capable of fully providing for children's right to education as declared in the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania and in the Convention on Children's Rights. The principles of democracy, equal opportunities and accessibility, which are stated by the Law of Education of the Republic of Lithuania, are nor respected. Neither the schools nor the local educational authorities are capable of dealing with these problems.

However, there have been some positive developments in the area of special education. According to 2000/01 data, children with special educational needs comprised 9% of the total pupil population of comprehensive/secondary schools, whereas only 1.1% of pupils were sent to special boarding schools. This indicator fully meets European educational standards. In the last decade, the number of students with mental disabilities who were sent to special boarding schools has significantly declined (Figure 5). The information on all pupils with special needs in all special schools (by type of disability) is given in Figure 6.

5. Youth schools

According to 1993 data, the number of young people (up to the age of 16) who did not attend school has been constantly growing. To halt this process, a new type of school was established—the youth school. The aim of these schools was to help teenagers aged 12 to 16 who suffered from communication problems and low motivation. By 2000, twenty-four youth schools had been established with a total of 2,461 students (Table 7).

Far-reaching individualization of the educational process is a distinctive feature of youth schools. They aim at diagnosing the students' learning difficulties and helping them to overcome them. These schools provide comprehensive education, some offer pre-vocational and complementary education. Pre-vocational and additional education facilitates the development of learner skills and helps the learner to make a career choice. The effectiveness of youth schools can be illustrated by the data on further careers of youth-school graduates at the basic level (Table 8).

6. Children requiring social care

The deteriorating quality of social work among children exerts a great influence on the accessibility and quality of education. From 1990 to 1998 the number of children in Lithuania had decreased by 86,000; the number of children who were orphaned during this period increased from 1,190 (in 1990) to 3,502 (in 1998).

The death of parents and belonging to vulnerable families became the main reasons for the loss of parental care. About 80% of children who lost parental care came from vulnerable families. The number of such families is increasing (Table 9), together with the number of children in these families. Moreover, since 1997 some children have become eligible for social care due to poverty.

Children's social care is organized in different ways. The number of municipal children's homes is increasing, a trend which only began at the beginning of the decade. A widely held opinion is that children should be in care close to their birthplace. New forms of social care are being set up: municipal children's care groups and centres in 1996; temporary children's homes in 1997. The number of children in various types of children's homes is shown in Table 10.

TABLE 7. The number of youth schools and youth school students in 1993–2000

School year	Number of schools	Number of students
1993/1994	3	194
1994/1995	11	1,032
1995/1996	19	1,668
1996/1997	22	1,939
1997/1998	23	2,010
1998/1999	23	2,225
1999/2000	24	2,461

TABLE 8. Further careers of youth school graduates.

	1995	1996	1997	1998
Graduated from youth school with a Certificate of Basic Education, %	76.8	77.3	84.9	83.2
Continued studies, total %:	64.5	69.3	76.8	77.1
• In grade 10, %	8.3	9.1	11.4	16.3
• At vocational schools, %	56.2	60.2	65.4	60.8

TABLE 9. Vulnerable families and their children

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Number of families	9.7	12.6	14.9	15.1	16.0
Number of children in these families	25.6	29.9	34.3	34.4	36.9

TABLE 10. The total number of the children in social care in various types of children's homes

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Number of children in care	6,827	8,069	9,052	9,352	8,991

7. Repeaters and drop outs

A high level of dropping out in primary and principal schools is an important internal factor affecting education, leading to social disadvantage (Figure 7). About 97% of the pupils who entered the first form graduate from the primary school (Table 11), whereas only 77% of pupils obtain the school-leaving certificate at the end of compulsory education (Table 12). If pupils do not obtain the school-leaving certificate at the end of compulsory education, only a few possibilities are provided by the Lithuanian education system to continue studying in secondary and higher schools. Thus, over 20% of young people have a very limited opportunity to pursue further formal education.

One of the most important reasons for this phenomenon is still the highly academic content of education with little attention being paid to the development of pupils' learning, communication, critical thinking and problem-resolving skills in comprehensive schools. A large number of pupils are not able to complete their studies and have to repeat the year. Most of the pupils who repeat the same form twice lose any further motivation to study and often leave a school at age 16. Some of them enter vocational schools and become poorly qualified workers, while others do not continue studying at all. Due to their poor qualifications, they are unable to compete in the labour-market and go to swell the numbers of the unemployed more often than those who have received higher education.

We can see from Figure 7 that the highest repetition rate is in forms 1, 6, 7 and 8, whereas the highest dropping-out rate is in forms 1, 6, 7, 8 and 9. Recently, now that the reform of education has been implemented and the content modernized, the number of pupils who repeat the same year twice is decreasing, but it still remains too high (Figure 8).

TABLE 11. Survival rate in primary school, 2000

The survival rate	**The number of the pupils who began studying in form 1 during the school years of 1996/97**	**A number of the pupils who began studying in form 5 during the school years of 2000/01**
0,97	54,410	53,098

TABLE 12. The rate of graduation from lower secondary school, 2000

The rate of graduation from lower secondary school	**A number of the pupils who began studying in form 1 during the school year 1990/91**	**A number of the pupils who received the principal education during the school year 1990/2000**
0,77	53,504	41,365

FIGURE 7. Distribution of drop-out rates and repetition rates by grades, 2000

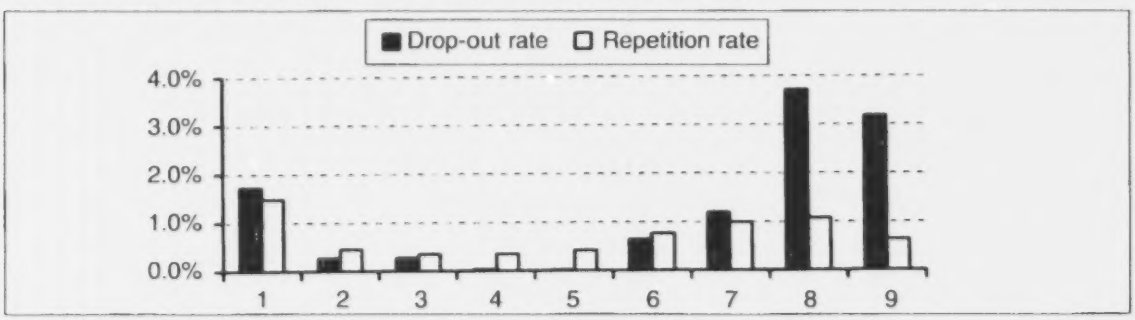
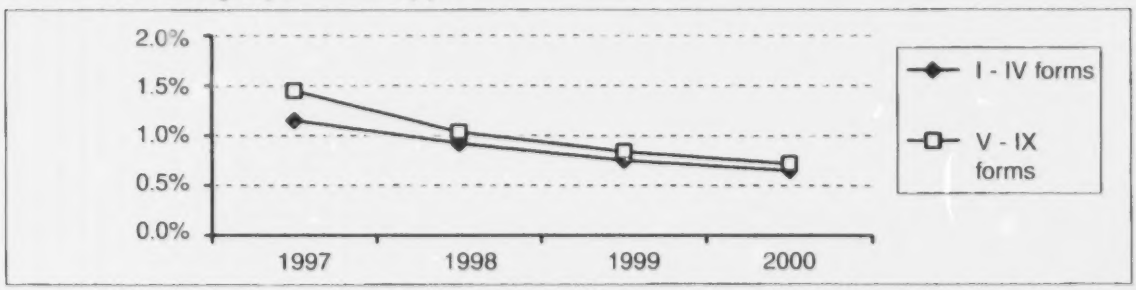


FIGURE 8. The average repetition rates by years



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8. The phenomena of pupil selection in comprehensive/secondary school

The selection of pupils for institutions of comprehensive/secondary education (especially if the selection is made not according to ability, but on the social origins of pupils) can increase social inequity even more. In spite of regular efforts in the country to stop selection to comprehensive/secondary schools, we cannot be happy about the results. Even if banned, selection often acquires surreptitious forms. Due to this fact, big differences can be found among schools. From Table 4 we can see that the results of the Matura examinations depend little on gender and urban/rural factors, but have a great deal to do with school factors. Certainly, we cannot explain the school factor only in terms of purposeful selection. However, as everyday experience and discussions in the press show, the significance of the achievements of some schools must be attributed to selection and cannot be ignored.

After the restoration of Independence in Lithuania, 'gymnasiums' were founded alongside regular secondary schools. These are secondary schools for pupils who seek more academic education. Entrance to this kind of school is made on the basis of the results of pupil testing or the marks received at school. At present, the results achieved during the graduation examinations by the pupils from these schools are far better than the results of the pupils from other schools. For example, the average scores of gymnasium pupils during the Matura examinations in mathematics and history in 1999 and 2000 exceeded by 15 to 25% the average scores of the pupils from other schools. Gymnasiums offering the complete twelve years of education were particularly remarkable for their efficient selection. Pupils from these schools learn from forms I to XII. It was therefore decided to change all 'gymnasiums' into four-year schools where pupils could only enter after having finished form VIII.

It is obvious that to a certain degree selection of pupils to schools and classes is based on their life skills, because learning results depend on the development of them. If not enough attention is paid to life-skills development at schools, the life-skills of pupils whose parents are more educated or whose parents hire qualified teachers surpass the life-skills of other pupils. In this way, selection according to life-skills becomes selection according to socio-economic standing. Life-skill development at schools becomes a means of managing pupil selection and achieving equal learning opportunities for all pupils.

9. The relative isolation of national minority schools

While there are a great number of advantages for national minorities to have traditional separate schools, there is also a certain hidden drawback to such schools. When national minority pupils go to separate schools, they are isolated from pupils of other nationalities. Therefore they lack opportunities to learn how to live together, to communicate and to collaborate with other ethnic groups. In order to at least partially lessen such a risk, life-skills for living in a multicultural society should be promoted in both national minority schools and in schools using Lithuanian as the instructional language.

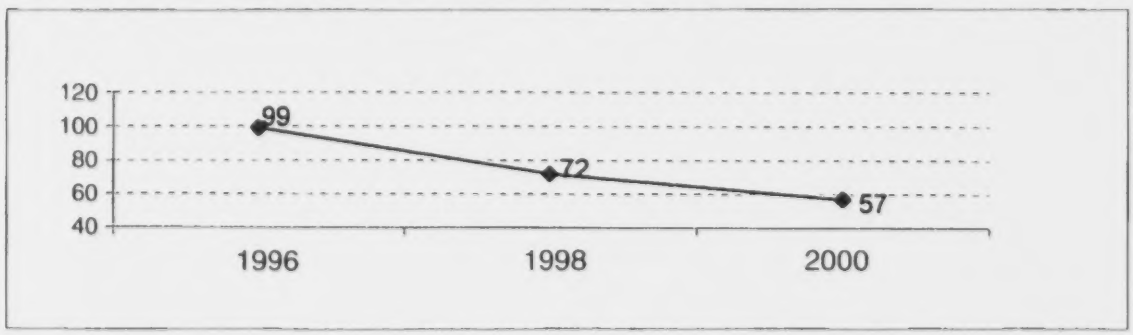
10. IT shortage in education

Information technology (IT) skills are becoming one of the most important life skills. IT is a fundamental factor encouraging scientific and economic progress, as well as the development of the communication society. At the same time, however, IT may contribute to the growth of social exclusion and unequal rights in education. For many pupils from low-income families, the school is the only possibility to learn how about IT.

IT is also important in teaching pupils with special learning needs. For most of them, IT is the most important tool for efficient learning and to overcome social exclusion.

IT skills are important for lifelong learning; therefore they are indispensable for every communication society member. Due to these reasons, it is extremely important to provide schools with IT. Poor provision of computer technologies (Figure 9) and Internet access prevents schools from fulfilling one of their most important functions—that is, to lessen social differences.

FIGURE 9. Number of students per computer in Lithuanian secondary schools in 1996–2000.



IV. EDUCATIONAL RESPONSES TO THE CHALLENGES

1. Curriculum reform

One of the goals of the comprehensive/secondary school curriculum reform in Lithuania is to develop pupils' life-skills. The most important focus is on personal, interpersonal, vocational, learning, communication, problem-solving and critical-thinking skills. So far this process has been impelled due to the initiative of the educational community. Fortunately, over recent years the focus on life-skill development in comprehensive/secondary school has been receiving more support from other educational stakeholders (most importantly, higher education establishments/universities). The development of life-skills (instead of narrow specializations) are also being given more attention in the reform of vocational education and training.

In national minority education, the aim is to find the best methods of applying bilingual education in the specific conditions found in our country. This concerns not only national minority schools, but also the teaching of national minority pupils who choose to study at schools using Lithuanian as the language of instruction.

The most recent political initiative in education in order to involve stakeholders into curriculum reform and development was the establishment of the National Education Forum. The forum undertook responsibility for furthering implementation of UNESCO's World Education Forum 2000 'Education for All' Framework. In its resolution, the EFA Forum stressed that schools offering basic education should be attractive, open and accessible to students of all ages and all communities. Schools should offer information technologies, ensure vocational consultation, create conditions for learning and engaging in teamwork, problem-solving and other skills for democracy and create conditions for each person to eventually enter the ever-changing world of employment with confidence. Teachers should be educated so that they will be able to help students develop these modern competencies.

2. A shift in the assessment of pupils' achievements

A new system for assessing pupil achievement in secondary schools is being designed. Detailed educational standards for pre-school education and grades II, IV, VI, VIII and X are being prepared at the moment. They will enable better planning of teaching and learning, and a greater degree of validity and reliability in assessing not only the academic knowledge of pupils, but also their life skills.

It is interesting to note that precise requirements have already been set regarding how many examination questions should measure reproductive knowledge and how many productive knowledge. For example, according to the mathematics examination syllabus, 60% of the examination paper should measure reproductive knowledge and 40% communication, problem-solving and mathematical thinking skills.

3. Reforms in educational structure

Four-form gymnasiums for all pupils (and not only for those who are academically orientated) are being established. Measures are being taken to prevent unjustified pupil selection. A new edition of the educational law is in preparation. It is meant to establish most of the structural changes, as well as overall pre-school education. New provisions for national minority education are also ready to meet the needs of these groups.

4. Teacher pre-service and in-service training

Teachers are being trained to develop pupils life-skills and to help them learn. In teacher training, more attention is being devoted to developing the teachers' life-skills.

5. Individuals with special needs

The new special education act is being implemented. Teachers are being trained to work with children with special needs, who are themselves being integrated into traditional comprehensive schools.

6. Implementation of IT at schools

The Strategy for Information and Communication Technology Implementation in Education is being implemented. Standards for teacher and pupil computer literacy have been prepared. Teachers are trained to apply IT in education, and the government is according fixed amounts of money to promote it.

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REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES FROM THE BALTIC AND SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES

Curricular reform and life-skills in Denmark

Anette Ipsen and Jørgen Thorslund

I. DEFINING SOCIAL INCLUSION

Defining the concept of social inclusion in Danish education involves taking into consideration at least three different perspectives that have had an influence since 1950:

- The perspective of equality;
- The perspective of including children with special needs;
- The perspective of ethnic minorities.

Lately, the three perspectives have competed with a new one: that of post-modernity. Due to the radical transformation of the post-modern society, social cohesion is dissolving into an extreme individualization of culture.

The classical approach to social inclusion emphasized the concept of equality, thus necessarily considering the matter of whether the education system is compensating, neutral or enforcing socially-based inequality and exclusion. From the late 1950s, major political parties agreed upon the aim of creating formal equality in education for all social classes. Throughout the 1960s, wide acceptance began to lead to real equality for disadvantaged social groups. However, this policy has now failed, according to a longitudinal study conducted by Hansen in 1995. Although educational reforms have produced an increase in the average level of education, they have not removed inequalities or improved social mobilityæneither for men nor for women.

A second perspective on social inclusion has emphasized the integration of children and young people with special needs. Great expectations have been placed on educational reform. From the late 1950s, a broad consensus agreed upon replacing segregation and individual services concerning disabled citizens. As the new alternative, the aim was integration in the normal family, in the regular school and in the local neighbourhood. Children were to remain in the family, in the class and in the local school. This strategy of integration has caused problems due to the fact that integration was based on the conditions of the majority. The disabled have often been exposed by their 'otherness'—causing stigmatization. By the Act of the Folkeskole, adopted in 1993, and influenced by the Salamanca Statement of 1994, the approach now has changed to an 'inclusive curriculum' (Holst, Langager & Tetler, 2000; our translation). The school must be prepared to make all children benefit, no matter what preconditions, needs or learning styles they bring with them:

> Regular schools with this inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all; moreover, they provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system (UNESCO, 1994, Article 2).

A third perspective emphasizes the opportunities for ethnic minorities in society. The introduction of migrant labourers in the late 1960s, many of whom were later joined by their families and followed by refugees, has forced education systems from the 1980s to develop a strategy of integration involving minorities from Yugoslavia, Turkey, Pakistan and the Middle East. Strategies have varied and have become highly political, not least in the general election campaign of November 2001. Demands for assimilation—calls for immigrants to find their proper place in Danish culture—are opposed by strategies of integration emphasizing that Denmark is becoming a multicultural society. Recent positions among Muslim descendants have demonstrated a third strategy—segregation—establishing an independent and 'original' culture separate from the Danish majority.

A fourth perspective on social inclusion has been gaining strength since 1980. Globalization of production, labour and culture has dissolved the accepted normality in capitalist society (Giddens, 1991). As an alternative, radical individualization is gaining strength, mixing traditional western youth culture and with that of minorities. Muslim youth, anti-globalists and socially disadvantaged groups are opposed to inclusion and interact with each other to protest against political, economic and cultural trends. However, the setting up of these groups and the turbulent formation of identity are part of the very same process of modernization. The old 'normality' dissolves into a far more complex normality, where the formation of identity does not end with adolescence but seems to continue through adulthood into old age. Everybody seems to be at the same time both deviant and normal in their wish to be different from everybody else.

II. PATTERNS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND THE CHALLENGES FOR EDUCATION

Four different perspectives contribute to identify or perhaps even produce different forms of social exclusion.

The perspective of equality draws attention to the fact that 20% of young people never receive a vocational diploma. This group is mainly made up of youngsters who have difficulties in reading, writing and mathematics. This group faces higher unemployment rates, fragile relations with the labour market and increased risk of permanent expulsion from the workforce through early retirement.

The perspective of special needs emphasizes the increasing reference to children and young people with special teaching needs. Although the Act of the Folkeskole is strongly based upon securing the learning of all children, the number of children being referred to special education has increased by 50% between 1991 and 1998 (Holst, Langager & Tetler, 2000).

The perspective of ethnic minorities emphasizes the difficulties for immigrants with poor school experiences, who often face unemployment and barriers in vocational training. Their children may even face additional problems, whether they are immigrants themselves or born in Denmark. Although being bilingual and bicultural should not necessarily cause problems in obtaining qualifications, members of ethnic minorities often experience refusal in job applications no matter what their written qualifications. The same problem is well documented among minorities applying for vocational training (Ministry of Education, 1998*a*, chapter 3).

Finally, the perspective of post-modernity may recognize the exclusion of the above-mentioned social groups, but it must also note the increasing problem of bullying. The extreme pressure in terms of identity formation may be one cause of wide problems of bullying in Danish schools. The Minister of Education (1999–2001) makes this point in an essay on values in modern society:

> No matter whether it is between pupils or between pupils and teachers, bullying largely originates in a lack of respect for the rights of others and of a sense of one's own worth. The pupil who bullies others does so, among other things, from a lack of respect for the qualities of others. The bullying behaviour originates in a lack of respect for the personal integrity of others. But one of the reasons for the development of bullying behaviour is also that the victim does not have enough self-esteem to resist it (Vestager, 2000*a*).

Although these four perspectives emphasize different forms of social exclusion, they seem to agree on two sets of factors posing a threat to social cohesion in Denmark.

First of all, the increasing demands for competence for entry into the labour market mean extreme pressure on disadvantaged social groups, including immigrants, who are expected to have competence not only in terms of literacy and numeracy, but now widely including knowledge of a foreign language (i.e. English), flexibility and particularly the ability to acquire new skills. To this must be added the breakdown of mutual values due to the accelerated speed of globalization, which eliminates all borders as marks of identification. Self-evident values of (the core) family, permanency and stable social norms are undermined by the confrontation with other family values, the evolution of the labour market and new individualized social norms.

Both of these two sets of factors are reinforced by the behaviour of some social groups who feel under pressure from the process. Frightened by the threat of social exclusion and xenophobic attitudes, scapegoats are exposed among immigrants, refugees, drug addicts and criminals. Strong demands for assimilation and severe punishment for deviation are widely supported among both younger and older groups facing difficulties in a society confronted with rapid change. Furthermore, a general tendency may be observed for re-conceptualizing social problems and reinterpreting all problems in an ethnic/cultural perspective. The anti-social behaviour of a young minority in the ghetto is interpreted mainly as a lack of assimilation, whereas their behaviour should more likely be explained in terms of social exclusion similar to other local gangs.

The challenges posed to education systems by the phenomenon of social exclusion may be listed as three: stigmatization, individualization and segregation.

1. Stigmatization

No matter how strong the political demands that have been put forward on an 'inclusive curriculum', the actual practice of teachers and specialists results in an increased number of pupils being referred to special needs training, either integrated in class or under special arrangement. Lots of new biological diagnoses (DAMP, etc.) are made available and used to label exclusion. Stigmatization is still a common risk.

2. Individualization

This is visible among pupils where a still increasing number of young students in grade 1 are labelled as 'not-teachable.' Similarly, parents are often seen making huge demands on the teacher relating to their own child, while neglecting the rest of the class.

3. Segregation

Segregation may be perceived at schools in the form of high numbers of parents abandoning the municipal school in favour of private schools. Well-off parents turn their back on the public school if they find the wide social recruitment of the class to be a problem. To participate in problem-solving or reconsider the causes of a problem may be out of the question. Similarly, an increasing number of private Muslim schools (mainly sponsored—as with all private schools—by the State) may be observed, where

fundamentalistic religious attitudes may be promoted that are directly opposed to those of public schools. When these pupils reach grades 10 to 12 they often attend public high schools—where segregation is less evident. Here we may anticipate still more discussion about the scientific approach used in high school, since fundamentalist pupils demand 'creationist' approaches.

III. EDUCATIONAL RESPONSES

1. Experiences of educational reform in general

Education for all is the general objective in Denmark. Education plays a central role in Danish societyæand is more crucial than ever. The labour market is placing greater demands on the workforce in terms of qualifications and competencies. Knowledge and information are the keys to understanding and success in an ever-more complex and changeable world.

It is therefore of central importance that education is inclusive and continuous so that everybody may learn and reach their full potential. Education should make clear links to daily life: 'It is an advantage for all that education is inclusive for the weakest' (Vestager, 2000*b*). The objective of the Danish Government is therefore to ensure:

- that all young people complete a youth education programme;
- that as many as possible—and at least 90–95%—of an age group complete a vocational/qualifying education programme;
- that lifelong education becomes a natural part of people's lives and of their participation in social life; and
- that the education system is flexible and develops steadily in step with society, so that it can continue to provide the vocational and personal qualifications that are needed in a modern high-tech society based on democratic principles.

In Denmark, there is a long tradition that the aim of the school is not only to focus on basic knowledge but also on the individual pupil's all-round personal development. It is also an aim to transmit central values about our outlook on man and society, and to support pupils in becoming responsible citizens in a democratic society.

It is not enough that individual pupils gain knowledge. At the same time, they have to learn to respect each other and to learn from their differences. School is an important facilitator of the values that society builds upon and at school these values should be inculcated in a way that emphasizes individuality as well as joint responsibility.

In 1993, the Danish Parliament adopted a new act on the Folkeskole, which has led to a reform of the school. One of the decisive objectives underlying the new reform was to strike a balance between the individual and the community, and between subject-specific and general education. The values that the Danish Folkeskole should convey to pupils are expressed in the Act on the Folkeskole. The overall objectives are as follows:

> (1) The Folkeskole shall—in co-operation with the parents—further the pupils' acquisition of knowledge, skills, working methods and ways of expressing themselves and thus contribute to the all-round personal development of the individual pupil.
> (2) The Folkeskole shall endeavour to create such opportunities for experience, industry and absorption that the pupils develop awareness, imagination and an urge to learn, so that they acquire confidence in their own possibilities and a background for forming independent judgements and for taking personal action.
> (3) The Folkeskole shall familiarize the pupils with Danish culture and contribute to their understanding of other cultures and of man's interaction with nature. The school shall prepare the pupils for active participation, joint responsibility, rights and duties in a society based on freedom and democracy. The teaching of the school and its daily life must therefore build on intellectual freedom, equality and democracy (Ministry of Education, 1995).

In order to ensure that in today's rapidly changing society all pupils, including the vulnerable ones, benefit from education, it has been decided to focus on the pupils' strongest proficiencies, that is, to identify their strengths and start developing their skills, knowledge and attitudes from here. In this way, the focus on the pupils' learning processes is strengthened.

All pupils cannot learn the same thing or learn in the same way. But all pupils can develop skills and knowledge, which strengthens their personality, self-esteem and subject-specific knowledge. This gives them the possibility of becoming constructive members of the community.

2. Curricular content in particular

The 1993 Act on the Folkeskole was implemented on the one hand through the establishment at the central level of aims and key knowledge and proficiency areas for individual subjects and obligatory topics. These are binding for the schools, and supported through the establishment of curricula. Curricula in Denmark are only intended as guidelines.

The educational reform of 1993 brought about a change in curricular content. Each subject and obligatory topic were described in relation to:

- the aim of the Folkeskole;
- the aim of the specific subject; and
- central knowledge and skills.

Every curriculum includes in its content the dimension of social and personal skills.

> Over the past twenty years changes in society have increased. The established social values that were so capable of guiding us in our daily lives a generation ago have lost their authority (Vestager, 2000*b*).

If all people are to develop tools to cope with and be included in our society, it is necessary that they optimize their social and personal skills. Basic subject knowledge is necessary, but not enough, since certainty is no longer a fact—things might change.

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Communicative skills, skills to cope with changes, critical-thinking skills, skills in co-operation, skills to develop one's own learning and empathy are ways that support people in becoming innovative and caring, aware of their own ways of learning and thus taking responsibility for it. It supports their own authority and solidarity with others.

The concept of learning has changed. Today, we regard learning as the pupil's inner subjective process. The teacher can facilitate learning through teaching, but it is the learner who learns. The Danish curricula are frames—guidelines that build upon this learning concept.

Experiences with the educational reform show that curricula and central knowledge and skills from 1993 are difficult to use in schools. They are not clear enough in their contents and form to be an instrument for planning and evaluating teaching. The curricula and central knowledge and skills give indications about content, activities and methods, but they lack distinct targets. All curricula are therefore being developed with distinct targets. In August 2001, the newly developed curricula in Danish and mathematics were ready.

Something completely new in the Danish educational tradition is that curricula and central knowledge and skills on the pupils' personal development are going to be described. The aim is that the Folkeskole: 'Shall give every single child courage for life, motivation for education and the pleasure of developing' (Vestager, 2000*b*).

The formulation of clear targets in connection with the curriculum is intended to ensure that all pupils with their different potentials go as far as possible in their knowledge and personal development.

3. How are life-skills contextualized?

Life-skills are included in all curricula. They are included as a dimension in all subjects. Life-skills are included under central knowledge and skills, specifically in the part 'Aim of the subject'.

Cross-curricular competencies shall be developed together with the subjects and cross-cutting topics. Life-skills should not be regarded in isolation, as they are an area that every teacher must include in his or her teaching and in the facilitation of the pupils' learning processes. Life-skills components in curricula are:
personal reflections and critical thinking;

- creativity, expression and the skill to plan, organize and evaluate;
- establishing and maintaining contact, empathy and to evaluate one's own behaviour;
- expressing thoughts and feelings;
- responsibility and loyalty;
- positive attitude towards changes, development and lifelong learning;
- self-esteem, trust, self-motivation, self-control, initiative and cultural competencies;
- human rights, health, environment (Egelund, 1999).

Another purpose that is clearly expected of curricula is to ensure dialogue between the teacher and the pupil. Dialogue is essential in differentiating teaching according to the child's development, needs and potentials. What place do they occupy in educational strategies?

In *Quality education for all: living together, democracy and social cohesion*, the Danish Minister of Education, Margrethe Vestager, points out that education must be based on fundamental values like solidarity, tolerance and understanding between people:

> I believe that there is a need for putting these fundamental principles on the agenda. These values are currently in focus as societies are changing from culturally and linguistically homogeneous societies into more multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies.
> To avoid prejudice, antagonism and even racism, we have to consider how we live together. To see intercultural co-existence not only as a perfectly normal way of life, but as a source of enrichment.
> Teaching common values and ideas has become unavoidable. The basic principles of democracy, tolerance and human rights are incorporated in the curricula of the Danish education system, but to become meaningful they have to be acquired and practised (Vestager, 2000*a*—our translation).

As a part of this strategy, curricular development focusing on clear targets is initiated and, as a concrete example of a strategy for implementing inclusive education, initiatives are taken to give the about 9% of the pupils who come from emigrant and refugee families a highly qualified instruction and educational provision in accordance with their specific needs.

Experience shows that the development of inclusion policies should be based on a consensus about a philosophy of inclusion. Curricula should be relevant to the needs of the context and the community, and foster the development of the 'whole learner'. Curricula should be flexible enough to accommodate the diversity of learning styles and pace, as well as to provide possibilities for social and emotional development. As inclusive education systems require new skills and knowledge from the teachers, teacher education should be revisited and designed to support inclusion.

The education system in Denmark is undergoing an evaluation with special focus on quality as part of the strategy of developing education to implement the intention of education for all.

4. The reform of adult education

In 2001 Denmark introduced a major reform in vocational education and the lifelong training system. The target is to tie lifelong training and further education programmes together in a single, coherent and transparent adult education system. The adult education reform has three main objectives:

1. To provide relevant adult education and continuing training offers to all adults at all levels, from the low skilled to university graduates.

2. Improving opportunities for those with the lowest level of education.
3. Better utilization of resources.

It is anticipated that the reform of adult education will improve the prospects for lifelong learning (Ministry of Education, 2001).

IV. EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

Two main impact assessment and evaluation programmes have been conducted on curricular reform in the area of life-skills in the late 1990s. One major national (and international) research programme dealt with life-skills—in terms of cross-curricular competences (CCC).

After the first four years of the new Act of the Folkeskole, it became evident for the three main stakeholders (the Ministry of Education, the local government in Denmark, and the Danish Teachers Union) that the implementation of this act was going to be more difficult than had been expected, even though the Ministry of Education had developed a strong programme to support school reforms in 1994. The three stakeholders agreed upon a mutual curriculum support programme (F2000) with eight points of focus to be fulfilled between 1998 and 2000.[1]

For each point of focus—e.g. no. 2: Challenges for each pupil—a stimulating programme was initiated to support the municipal authorities, local schools and all teachers in implementing the main principles of the act. Distinct targets were decided. For instance, those for no. 2 were:

In the year 2000 it must be made clear that the needs and requirements of each pupil shall form the basis upon which teaching will be arranged and organized. This means:

- The head-teacher shall initiate and support teacher's co-operation, verify and emphasize a flexible plan for the school year and all teachers.
- On the basis of each pupil's needs and requirements, teachers shall co-operate on planning.
- Streaming shall only be used as a pedagogical procedure.
- Knowledge shall be shared of all relevant school experiences in relation to applying teaching to each pupil's needs and requirements (Ministry of Education, 1998).

As part of this programme, schools were offered the help of school advisors, as well as financial and material support. Finally, major recommendations were adopted for each of the eight points of focus and the programme was evaluated on a scientific basis.

Another strong curricular initiative was the reforming of the Danish Evaluation Institute.[2] From 1999, this national agency would cover primary and secondary schools, as well as all State schools, colleges and universities. Through two experimental evaluation projects in 2000-01, each on a full municipal scale, emphasis was placed on the relationship between the municipal school administration and the learning of the individual pupil. This gives a perspective of great interest to the life-skills curriculum.

A third relevant initiative includes an international research project on cross-curricular competences, where the aim has been to develop a taxonomy of life-skills and, at the same time, to evaluate how teachers and schools may support the forming of life-skills (Egelund, 1999).

1. What lessons have been learned?

The main conclusion in relation to the development of life-skills is that it is not enough to establish objectives and demands. Based on the curriculum development programme F2000, the Ministry of Education has decided to initiate a new projectæ'distinct targets'æspecifying targets of subjects and cross-curricular competencies to be achieved by 'teaching to improve pupils comprehensive and personal development'. As mentioned above, new regulations are published as curriculum specification of targets and key-stages. This includes guidance on life-skills. The form of curricular guidance may be important, as the ministry initially put forward more open suggestions, invited comments and supported knowledge-sharing on good examples prior to the final regulation. This could be called 'curriculum-in-dialogue'.

Similarly, the international research project concludes that specific and new targets on life-skills are not sufficient—teaching must be improved. Teaching should be:

- *Child-centred:* i.e. starting with children's everyday life and experiences and adapted to their needs, preconditions and potentials.
- *Motivating:* teaching should support pupil's active involvement in learning. A teacher may teach a student, but learning is a process performed by the student through committed involvement.
- *Challenging:* learning should contain demands and distraction. Learning involves hard work, failures and progress. Even failure may be part of the fun—how often did one fall off learning to ride a bicycle?
- *Social focused:* part of learning should take place in a social context. It may be in-groups or between pairs. It is stimulating to learn with others. Groups are the proper place for life-skills practice (Egelund, 1999).

In the words of Egelund, we may conclude that:

These aims are not fulfilled in traditional teaching organized in lessons and by subject. The aims are better supported involving case- and project-based teaching organized in non-lessons. It is an advantage if teaching involves co-operation across grades (Egelund, 1999).

Notes

1. The strong political agenda was that, if this implementation support programme failed, Parliament would initiate a new school act—likely to be oriented more towards new public management than towards educators.
2. http://www.eva.dk

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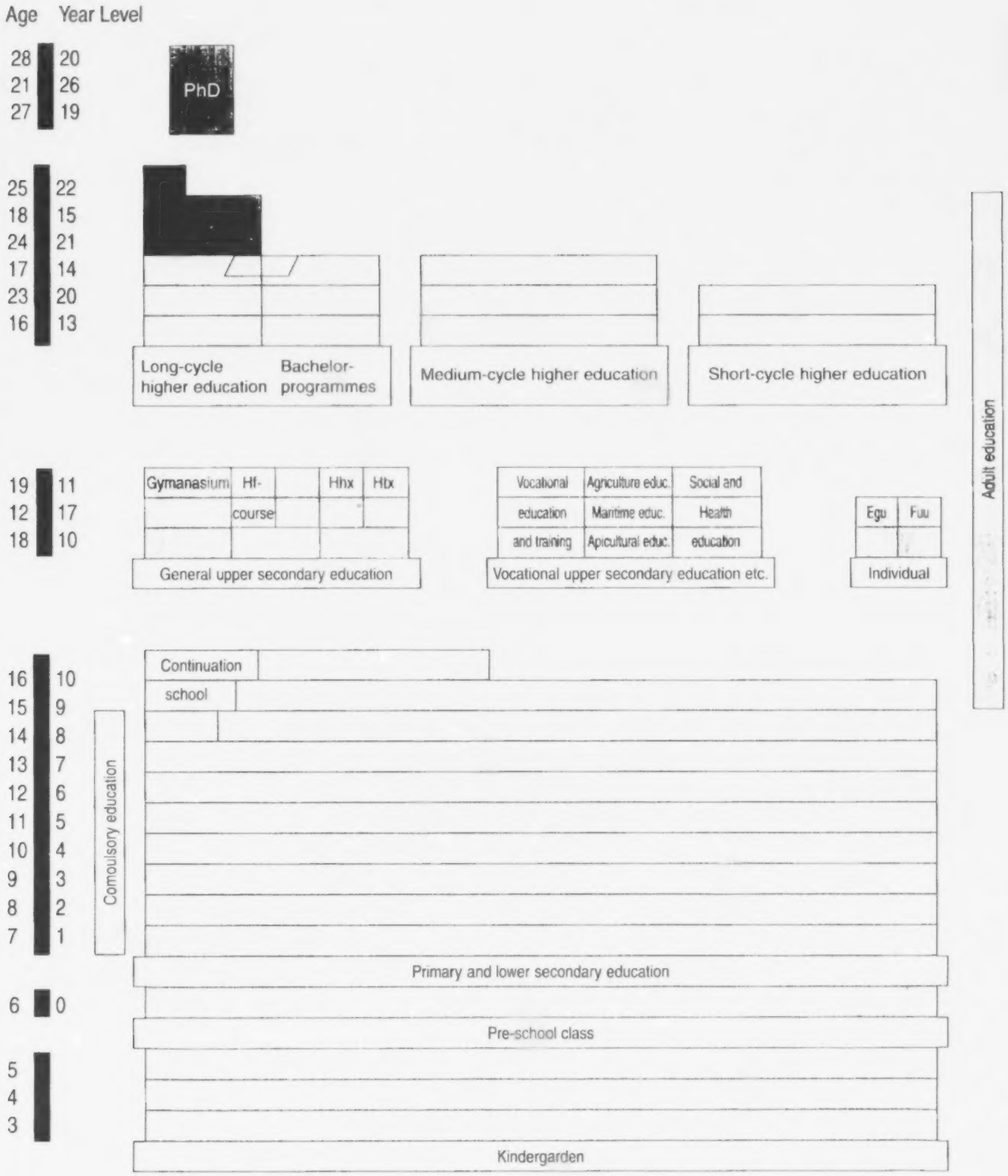
FIGURE 1. Diagram of the Danish education system—1999



Note: The age is the theoretical minimum age for formal education, i.e. excluding adult education. After basic school, the pupils are often older due to sabbaticals, repetition, change of study programme, etc. The arrows illustrate possible paths between basic school, upper secondary and higher education, but not actual transitions.

70 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Developing civic education in Estonia

Sulev Valdmaa

I. THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET REGIME

At the end of 1980s, several new states emerged as the USSR entered a period of political, economic, social and even cultural turbulence. Most of the values and rules of communist society no longer corresponded to the needs of the new societies. Deep changes also took place in educational life.

At the turn of 1990s, Estonia chose the legal restoration of independence that had been lost at the time of the Soviet occupation in the 1940s. This decision had radical consequences. For instance, the previous dominant planned economy was replaced with a market economy, whereas equalizing and supportive behaviour towards people was changed in favour of liberalism. This radical change in Estonian society required a special period of transition before coming into force. We may consider that the period of transition continues even this day, but generally by the end of the 1990s the new social system had been consolidated.

The transition period had been a challenge for education too. The new paradigm demanded new teaching content and methodologies. For some traditional subjects, like history and Soviet-type civics, the need for conceptual change was extremely evident. The changes that should take place in the teaching of history were quite easily tackled. Some historical events had to be presented in a light different from Soviet times, some forgotten personalities had to be resuscitated, the role of some communist 'heroes' had to be re-evaluated, etc. While far reaching, the changes in history teaching were nevertheless only cosmetic. Civic education of the Soviet period, however, had been a pure tool for the indoctrination of young people. This subject could not simply be 'repaired'.

By 1988, the teachers' attitude towards this tool of Soviet indoctrination was that it could no longer be taught. There had been one lesson per week in the eighth grade and two lessons per week in the twelfth grade of this form of 'civics'; the subject was simply abandoned on the teachers' own initiative. Other subjects took over the free periods—for the most part history, because there was a real need for additional time to teach the new content. One idea that circulated was that so much damage had been done to the aims, goals and content of this subject during the Soviet era that civics did not need to be taught at all.. This is what the official decision-makers at the Ministry of Education thought and, since 1989, civics no longer appeared on the list of compulsory school subjects to be taught.

II. FIRST CHANGES: TOWARDS DEMOCRACY

Ever since the changes in society had begun, the educationalists of Estonia had made big efforts to modernize teaching at schools. For that purpose, lots of international contacts were established and the rich experience of contemporary school life in Western countries was acquired. Among other discoveries, a civics course was found to exist in the curriculum of almost all countries. This was then recognized as one of the most needed tools for promoting democracy in the transitional society of Estonia. It should be pointed out that Sweden was the country most closely examined at this time.

Already at the beginning of the 1990s some efforts had been made by those responsible for history and civics at the ministry level to offer civics to school—or at least some similar subject belonging to the social sciences—to replace the rejected Soviet 'civics'. Alternative programmes for the teaching of ethics, logic, the history of religions, Western and Eastern philosophy, law, etc., were prepared and advertised. For the primary level a subject called 'home study' was designed to introduce the youngest students to their immediate neighbourhood and the everyday life taking place there. That subject contained a great deal of civics content as it was imagined at that time. Unfortunately, nobody was able to compile or create the teaching resources for these suggested optional courses, such as textbooks and teachers' manuals, and teachers were faced with some difficulties in undertaking them in the classroom.

Today, we do not have a very clear picture about what really happened in the classrooms at that time. What is known is that, despite the official point of view, there were some teachers, mostly in schools using Russian, who continued for many years teaching the old content containing theories of 'scientific communism', 'scientific atheism' and Marxist philosophy.

It should be mentioned that during the half century of Soviet occupation Estonian society turned from being a

nation-State into a multi-ethnic and multicultural one. There were at least 90% of ethnic Estonians living in the country in 1940; by the beginning of the 1990s this figure was closer to 62%. A large group of non-Estonians used Russian in their everyday life and their ability to speak Estonian was often rather poor. This feature of our society played an important role for education in general and for civic education in particular.

Already by 1992, a small group of educators had worked out a curriculum for teaching a new type of civics for grades 5, 8 and 11. The Ministry of Education added it to the list of suggested alternative subjects to replace the old Soviet-type civics. From the very beginning, the authors of the new civics curriculum pointed out the urgent need for that particular subject in society and asked that it be recognized not as an alternative but as a compulsory subject. For grade 5, three alternative courses were offered for teaching two lessons per week: 'Me and the world' as civics through nature; 'Man, history, society' as an integrated course of civics and history; and 'Introduction to history' as a history course.

The new type of civics syllabi replaced the existing 'Foundations for the Soviet State and law' left over from the Soviet-period courses in the eighth grade and 'Teaching about society' in the eleventh grade.

For the first time in over fifty years, the syllabus for the fifth-grade course, 'Me and the world', gave a chance to speak and discuss the human being as a free creation of nature having natural freedoms and rights. It was the first time that the Bible and its content were recommended and could be discussed in the classroom. The syllabus contained the following blocks and topics for teaching:

- Nature (the diversity of nature surrounding a human being, different theories about how life developed on Earth);
- Man (the capacities and responsibilities of man, theories of creation of mankind, human races in the contemporary world);
- Me (my origins, my family and its role, my future);
- Myself and others (who are the 'other people' next to me, peoples' character, neighbours of Estonia and our relationships with them, living with other people);
- Peoples' activities (creation and destruction, history as the visible evidence of peoples' past);
- Culture;
- Our contemporary world.

It must be mentioned that, as the course contained lots of ideas and facts that were unusual for most of the history teachers (who were the potential teachers for that course), the first primitive teachers' manual in Estonia for social studies was created in order to make teaching more accessible to these volunteers.

The civics syllabus of 1992 for the eighth grade was designed and consisted of the following content blocks:

- Man in society (the historical background for the foundation of the modern State, the position of a person in society and in relation to the State during past centuries);
- The family (the meaning of the family and the values of family life);
- Education (the meaning of education for society and a person, and trying to describe the rather sophisticated situation of education during the current transition period in Estonia);
- The Republic of Estonia (introducing learners to the Constitution, principles of democratic elections, Parliament, the institution of the Head of State, government, local government and the legal system);
- A citizen's rights, freedoms and responsibilities (trying to introduce the learners to principles and concepts of democracy and citizenship);
- Everyday life in Estonia (trying to describe the contemporary micro- and macro-structure of the Estonian economy and the concept of a free-market economy, national defence, etc.).

The civics syllabus for the eleventh grade contained two general blocks divided into smaller topics:

1. The Development of human society and its constituents:

- Races, nations, religions;
- Population processes (for example, migration);
- The development of economics (agriculture and industry);
- The information society;
- Socialist societies and the changes after socialism;
- Poor and rich countries;
- Fiscal and economic policy;
- Education;
- The mass media.

2. State, politics, law:

- Elements of State power;
- Democracy and civil society;
- Types of States, forms of government;
- Elections;
- Political trends in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries;
- Estonian statehood and our neighbours;
- Local government;
- The rule of law;
- National defence;
- International relations.

Understandably, in 1992, rather a lot of the described content in the syllabi was hypothetical and a question of imagining a future for Estonia. Nobody could tell how the Estonian economy would develop, what our relationship with other countries would be, etc. The authors of the syllabi considered the teaching of potential futures as preparing students theoretically to understand the concepts of democracy, the principles of a market economy and the rule of law. It was seen as a key to the future way of life that the society had chosen. Advocating teacher training and compiling teaching materials that supported the new syllabi also started. People who became acquainted with the ideas and content of the new syllabi understood the necessity and value of teaching them. Unfortunately, at that time the Ministry of Education avoided recognizing the civics curriculum as a compulsory subject.

A non-governmental organization established in 1992 to strengthen democracy in Estonia, the Jaan Tõnisson Institute, started to support the development of civics. In order to achieve this goal, the institute provided the only available foreign partnership projects offered to Estonia for strengthening civil society and democratic changes. Promoting civic education was one of the priorities for that purpose. Eight people were working in the institute at that time. Three different authors wrote the first original civics textbook for the eighth grade and it was published by a private publishing house in 1992 without any State support. The textbook was made available for Russian schools in Estonia in 1993. The textbook for the gymnasium (eleventh grade) was published in Estonian in 1996, but still without any support from the State.

In 1993, the Jaan Tõnisson Institute launched some larger projects to provide teachers with in-service training and to produce methodical aid materials in accordance with the new civics curriculum. The co-operation partners came from several Western countries: the International Foundation for Election Systems and the National Endowment for Democracy (United States of America); the Netherlands Helsinki Committee; PHARE (European Union); etc. The first in-service training seminars, lasting from three to five days, were popular among the teachers, who were invited to participate and to become acquainted with the new ideas and teaching methods. Among the lecturers and facilitators, there were many people from the West. Working together with those people was a new and exciting experience for teachers coming from the atmosphere of the closed Soviet society, where there had been no freedom of expression or thought.

The first seminars were completely free for the participants and were particularly popular because of that fact. The organizers of the seminars, however, faced a difficulty—our teachers were being exposed to 100% new knowledge and did not realize the value of methods that were different from the lectures that they were used to, such as discussions and group work for instance. The organizers and lecturers were often criticized because of 'wasting time on long and empty discussions not wanted to anybody'—as was expressed by the participants.

In general, in the educational life of Estonia during the years 1988 to 1994 there were experimental pathfinding initiatives made in all subjects. Changes touched not only history and civic education, but also science, languages, the arts and the other subjects and blocks of subjects. Liberalization from the Soviet times required the active involvement of teachers of all subjects to change the time-schedules, the content items, teaching methods, etc. During the Soviet period, it had not been allowed to modify aims, goals and contents. Now, each school and practically every teacher could decide to make fundamental changes. For instance, the most creative schools and classrooms introduced completely new subjects and even started to implement alternative pedagogical systems. The first private establishments, such as Waldorf schools, were set up.

III. THE NEW NATIONAL CURRICULUM

In 1992, after more than fifty years of Soviet occupation, Estonia officially declared its independence. Society showed its willingness to build up a democratic liberal market economy. The rather turbulent situation of Estonian education described above was evidently a necessary stage for discovering through practical experience the advantages and disadvantages of the new rationales, aims and philosophical bases operating in the new political and socio-economic climate.

It must be said that not all teachers were willing and able to participate in the experiments of these years. In most cases, even five or six years after the start of the great changes subject teachers continued to reproduce the Soviet subject programmes very faithfully, teaching the prescribed contents and keeping to the Soviet lesson plans. Meanwhile, the innovative movements in education were equally visible and influential. In 1993, the Ministry of Education started to analyse the achievements of schools and teachers who were enjoying great freedom and working without regulations. The Ministry came to the conclusion that, on the basis of the new experiences, a New National Curriculum should be compiled for Estonia.

In 1993, a large body, consisting of approximately 200 teachers, prominent society members, scientists from different areas, administrators, etc., was brought together to work out the New National Curriculum—the first educational regulative document compiled by the members of Estonian society for the Estonian State for more than half a century. The substantial document produced consisted of two major parts: the general introductory part (containing a list of overall goals, aims and philosophical explanations for the teaching process in general and for subjects in particular); and syllabi for each compulsory subject for each level of the public school. Due to the fact that attention had been paid to civics from the very beginning of the transition process, including publishing the first original civics textbooks and launching in-service teacher training, civics was now included on the list of compulsory subjects in the new curriculum. A special team for developing the civics curriculum, replacing all the previously compiled syllabuses, was assembled.

The process of designing the New National Curriculum took slightly more than two years. In 1996, the Riigikogu (the Estonian Parliament) adopted the New National Curriculum as law. At the same time, the Estonian school was officially extended to twelve years of study instead of eleven. Concerning civics, the outcomes of the process were as follows:

- Civics became an obligatory school subject;
- Civics was grouped with psychology, ethics, family studies and teaching about man (the last two being newly designed courses) in the school cycle called social subjects;
- Civics appears in grades 4, 9 and 12 as a separate course; in all of the other years civics was a set of recommended topics;

- The teaching of civics should take place in close integration with other subjects, especially those belonging to the social studies cycle;
- Teaching civics in Estonian and Russian schools shall be identical.

The civics syllabus for grade 4 was designed for teaching one lesson per week and consisted of the following content blocks:

- Man and man (communicating with other people);
- Man and time (the value of the time, planning the use of time);
- Man and money (wise use of money, private budget);
- Local government (types of local government, elections);
- Man and laws (the meaning of law, human rights, rights of children);
- Man and the mass media (different types of mass media, skills in information use).

The civics syllabus for grade 9 was designed for the teaching of two lessons per week and consisted of the following four content blocks:

1. Society

- society as a form of human existence;
- how to structure society;
- who makes society?
- human needs and interests;
- how to deal with different interests in society;
- what is the State and for whom does it work?
- what is democracy?
- communication in the contemporary world.

2. Law

- what is law, what is the lawful state?
- written and unwritten laws;
- why does the State need laws?
- the Constitution;
- how to be a free and responsible citizen;
- what is equality for everyone guaranteed by law?
- you are becoming a citizen;
- what are the rights and obligations of a citizen?
- what is international law?
- what are human rights?

3. Economics

- what is the driving force behind the economy?
- what kind of economic systems exist?
- what is the State's role in economics?
- the State budget;
- why do we pay taxes?
- what is social security?
- money and other valuables;
- the Estonian economy at the end of the twentieth century.

4. Government

- is Estonia a parliamentary state?
- how do the people participate in government?
- Parliament;
- the President of the Republic;
- the Government of Estonia;
- what is local government?
- is there control over power?
- the court system of Estonia;
- information in a democratic society.

The civics syllabus for grade 12 was designed for the teaching of two lessons per week and consisted of the following content blocks:

- The structure of society (organization of the State, managing power, the political culture, economics in society);
- The development and constitution of contemporary society (the industrial revolution, the birth of democracy in Europe and theories of democracy, the industrial society, the information society);
- The governing of society (people's participation in the ruling of society, the role of elections, parliamentary and presidential democracy, power separation);
- Society and economy (society's economic resources, the market economy, indicators of economic achievement);
- The individual and society (social status, labour market, human rights, the rights of a citizen, social security);
- International relations (differences in national development, poor and rich countries, global problems, the principles of international communication, the position of Estonia in the world).

Logic, Western and Eastern philosophy, law and the history of religions, taken from the list established at the beginning of 1990s, were maintained as recommended alternatives. The change in status from an alternative to a compulsory subject for civics meant that:

- teachers were now obliged to teach the subject;
- universities may consider the preparation of teachers of civics to be satisfying a need;
- the State guarantees to schools the money for teaching civics lessons and for purchasing civics textbooks;
- publishing houses might become economically interested in producing civics textbooks.

To evaluate the New National Curriculum as a whole, it should be noted that this is the first attempt made in Estonia for a very long time to develop an independent, conceptual basic document for education. Therefore, it should be considered as an experiment—a pathfinding operation. Today, it is clear that alongside many achievements there are also some major failures. The biggest one seems to be the gap between philosophical declarations about the goals and aims of education in an independent Estonian Republic and the inability to implement the same ideas in the syllabus of different subjects. Different subjects presented in the curriculum are not integrated; standards are not determined. During the following years, these problems have caused increasing problems for subject teachers when working in the classroom.

The biggest problem for schools and teachers appears to be the dilemma that the New National Curriculum was declared to be a framework only, on the basis of which each school had to design a concrete school curriculum and each teacher had to draw up his or her personal subject curriculum. This idea was completely new and teachers

were not prepared or ready to carry out this task in the required way.

IV. PROBLEMS ARISING FROM THE NEW CURRICULUM

Despite the official declaration in the New National Curriculum that civics had a priority status, the real position of that subject did not advance accordingly. The reasons for this were:

- poor preparation of new civics teachers by universities;
- difficulties in in-service training to re-qualify teachers for working with the New National Curriculum;
- the slow process of compiling original teaching aids in accordance with the general principles of the New National Curriculum;
- lack of knowledge and skills to produce contemporary teaching materials (for example, textbooks);
- the poor ability of educational administrators to appreciate differences in the situations, attitudes, motivations and goal-settings in Estonian and Russian schools and how they influenced the teaching and study of civics.

These problems would evidently have been solved to a certain extent if the educational authorities could have set up step-by-step arrangements or appropriate programmes for implementing the New National Curriculum. Instead of that, Estonia took the decision of greater liberalization of education. For teacher training, this meant that universities had a large measure of autonomy in determining what, how much and by what means to teach. As the popularity of the teaching profession declined at the beginning of the 1990s in comparison with new professions, like public administrator, lawyer, economist, etc., the State's call for educating a corps of newly prepared teachers became impossible. Universities started to broaden their faculties to cater for the more popular professions, even being able to open some fee-paying branches. As far as the system of in-service training for teachers was concerned, all the activities were abandoned by the State in the hope that a free-market situation would prevail and training would be provided by private systems. The same situation applied to textbook publishing—it was completely placed in the hands of private publishers.

As a result, basic teacher training, in-service teacher training and textbook publishing were made largely dependent on business interests. It was easier to manage the 'old' traditional subjects like mathematics or mother-tongue teaching in the new situation, where the staff of teachers was rather homogenous and already organized into subject teachers' unions. Civics, being a new creation, could not enjoy such protection. The only body dealing concretely with the issues of civics teaching was the ten-member advisory Council for Teaching Social Subjects within the Ministry of Education. Unfortunately, there were too many different interests represented among the ten-member council, ranging from people dealing with logic and ethics to economics. The council itself sometimes was not free from conflict as participants competed for their share of lessons in the weekly schedule. Civics was simply one interest among many others.

Even after the New National Curriculum had been adopted by Parliament, the real advancement of civics was not pursued systematically by the State authorities, but more by non-governmental structures like the Jaan Tõnisson Institute. The free-market situation led to the creation of several new (in most cases private) in-service training centres and private publishers. These new structures started to provide services to civics also. As nothing was regulated by the State, the services offered by these entrepreneurs often appeared to be too eclectic and haphazard in the beginning.

A couple of years after adopting the New National Curriculum, the first conclusions about the quality of that document could be carried out. Teachers of civics started to indicate that some goals were being poorly achieved, such as:

- integration between different school subjects;
- equal and similar civics teaching in Estonian and Russian schools;
- teaching civics in the primary and middle school classes in the form of suggested topics, etc.

The New National Curriculum had also avoided setting up achievement standards for teaching and learning. This was considered to be a weak point too, as it was not clear to teachers whether they had reached their goals or not. The small amount of civics lessons per week (two) at the gymnasium level did not allow pupils to pass a final examination in that subject, which considerably diminished its reputation.

V. 'EXTRA-CURRICULAR' PROCESSES

The measures taken to develop and strengthen the teaching of civics in Estonia during the period 1992–2000 have been considerable. Among the different partners, there have been private training institutions providing in-service training for teachers, volunteers arranging different thematic exhibitions, private publishers producing materials for teachers, foreign embassies offering exchange programmes for teachers, etc. For instance, the Jaan Tõnisson Institute established the Civic Education Centre, which became a member of several international umbrella organizations, such as CIVITAS, and where the UNESCO Chair on Civic Education and Multicultural Studies was established. Junior Achievement Estonia—a non-governmental organization providing aid for economic studies at compulsory school—was already established at the beginning of the 1990s. During the years 1995/97, the Jaan Tõnisson Institute produced in co-operation with the Netherlands Helsinki Committee a special optional course on human rights for compulsory school forms 6 to 8. Currently, the process of producing an optional law course for the Estonian gymnasium school, 'Man and law', which broadens civics teaching, is coming to an end.

Attempts to create supportive systems and resources for teaching civics in Estonia should be evaluated in order for their value to be appreciated. The question could be asked: to what extent has it influenced teaching civics in the New National Curriculum? At the Tallinn Pedagogical University a programme dealing with the IEA (International Association for Evaluation of Educational Achievements) civic education research in Estonia was launched in 1998. Recently, the first outcomes of this international study on students' skills in civics have been published. An overview of the understanding of democracy by some 3,826 Estonian eighth-graders was also published in local newspapers. The research shows that, among the twenty-eight states participating in the research, Estonia was placed in twenty-third or twenty-fourth place, together with Lithuania. It is too early today to say what the role in Estonia is of teaching civics at school in reaching this low achievement, because the cohort concerned (eighth-graders) have only studied civics on a regular basis one lesson per week in the fourth grade. Their knowledge, beliefs and understanding will be influenced a great deal (if not entirely) by many other factors. But the research indicated strongly that in students' knowledge and skills there are differences depending on whether the children are living in the countryside or in towns, whether they attend ordinary or gymnasium schools, and whether they are Estonians or Russian speakers.

The Jaan Tõnisson Institute for Civic Education, created in co-operation with Indiana University, is currently conducting research throughout Estonia on civics teaching from the point of view of the teacher. Hopefully, that research could broaden our understanding of the situation with regard to teaching civics. It is already known, for instance, that there are lots of problems with providing qualified teachers. Quite often, pedagogues of some other subjects, who are poorly prepared in social sciences, teach civics. So, among the people teaching civics there are a number of religious instruction teachers and people not having any teacher training at all—former Soviet bookkeepers for instance. In some cases, civics is considered by some schools to be a second-class subject, even today; it could be taught for the time being by the sports master. Together with the data of the IEA research and the Jaan Tõnisson Institute's work in the field, Estonia hopefully will be able to carry out a systematic and profound analysis of the situation in civics teaching and design further projects for the country.

VI. THE THIRD GENERATION OF CIVICS CURRICULUM

After implementing the New National Curriculum, its weaknesses began to appear, not only for the teaching of civics but also for most of the other school subjects. Many articles concerning these problems were published in newspapers. In 1999, Estonian educationists started to indicate the urgent need to redesign that document. A special body—the Curriculum Development Centre—was set up at Tartu University in 2000 with the task of investigating and systematizing the experiences gained while implementing the New National Curriculum and, on the basis of the outcomes, to suggest changes to it. For civics, this would mean designing the third generation of the curriculum in a ten-year period.

In connection with the recently launched curriculum reform, the Jaan Tõnisson Institute Civic Education Centre was asked to analyse the civics curriculum currently in force and to design the changes required. The institute was given this task by the Ministry of Education and was required to work together with the Tartu University team, which had developed the subjects associated with civics in the block of social subjects entitled 'Family Studies' and 'Teaching about Man'. The specialists were asked to find ways for deeper integration of the three social subjects.

After working together approximately for one year, the outcome of the process was controversial: instead of closer integration, the decision was made that the subjects 'Family Studies' and 'Teaching about Man' present content focused around the human being, but civics concentrates around the concept of society. The advisory Council for Teaching of Social Subjects found this particular truth to be so evident that it was recommended to reconsider our whole understanding about the possible and impossible integration of different contents in the block of social subjects.

As a result of the team's work, in February 2001 the newly redesigned Curriculum of Civics was presented to the Ministry of Education and to Tartu University Curriculum Development Centre. This third generation curriculum keeps the same time schedule for teaching civics—one lesson per week in the fourth grade and two lessons per week in the ninth and twelfth grade. Concerning the syllabus, only the most needed changes were made compared to the previous one. Therefore, the changes made to the third-generation civics curriculum are at first view not very far-reaching; the difference is in the goal-setting and standards.

Starting from September 2001, the content of the fourth-grade course will contain the following main blocks:

- By whom is society made;
- How society is ruled;
- The main resources for running society;
- People and the law;
- People and information.

The ninth-grade course will contain the following main blocks:

- Society as a form of human existence;
- Concept and functions of the State, the organization of the Estonian State;
- The people, the Constitution and democracy;
- The people, the State and the law;
- The State and economics;
- Man and economics;
- Everybody's well-being and place within society.

The twelfth-grade course will contain the following main blocks:

- Developing and constituting contemporary society;
- The structure of contemporary society;

- Governing society;
- The basic economic principles of society;
- The individual and society;
- The diverse nature of the contemporary world;
- International communication and co-operation.

As stated, compared to the previous curriculum the nature of the changes does not lay so much in the teaching content as in the goals and aims. The logic of the civics curriculum has generally been the same from the beginning of the 1990s: in the fourth grade the children will meet for the first time to prepare for the terms, stories and cases making them familiar with the social sciences; in the ninth grade they will study the society in which they live—Estonia; in the twelfth grade young people will analyse the global issues.

If the previous curriculum placed stress on the learners' knowledge and theoretical comprehension, the new one declares much more the importance of learning practical skills during teaching in all grades. The new curriculum also introduces and pays more attention to the concepts needed for integration into a multi-ethnic society and advocates obtaining Estonian citizenship for students in Russian schools, who are mostly not yet citizens. For instance, an attempt will be made while writing the new textbooks to tackle and explain the meaning of homeland or fatherland in ways acceptable to both communities—Estonians and Russian speakers. The suggestion was made to the State authorities that passing the examination in civics at the end of the ninth grade by the young non-citizens could be taken as the alternative to the State citizenship examination on knowledge about the Constitution and Estonian statehood.

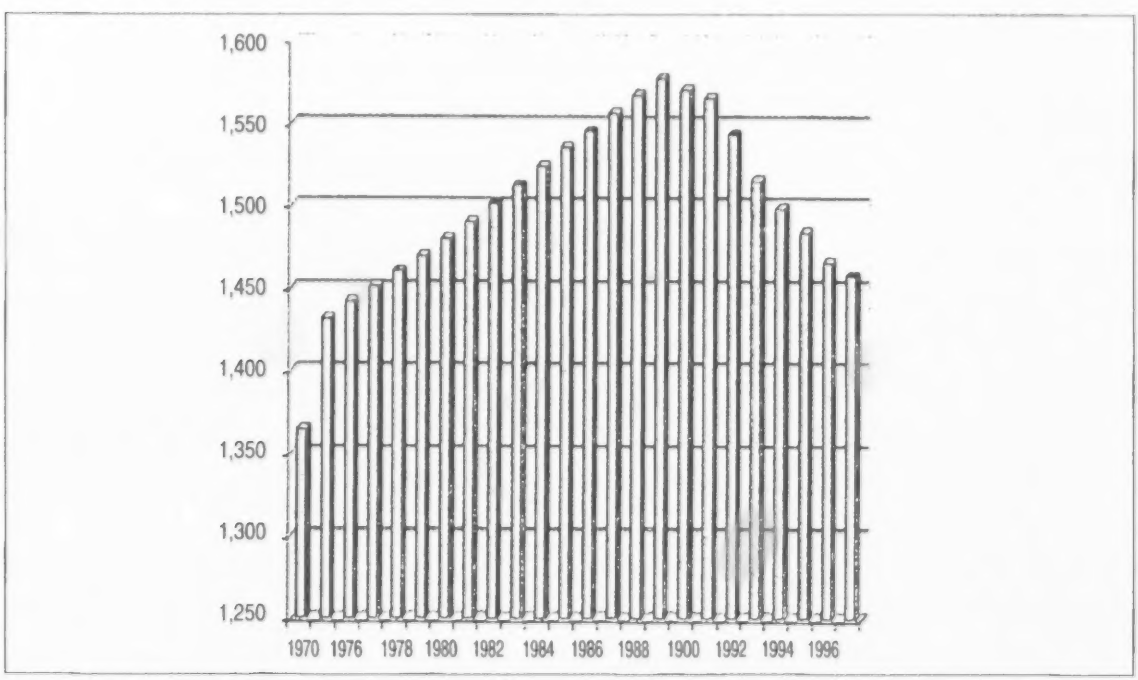
VII. CONCLUSION

After ten years of liberal developments, civics teaching in Estonia has reached a situation where society has started to pay attention to this particular sphere of education. Politicians are speaking about their weak contacts with the people and about the people's low interest in the activities of State power. Ordinary people are speaking about the uncertainty of values and attitudes spreading through society. Young people acknowledge their low readiness for independent life after leaving school. Discussion of these issues was unknown ten years ago. More and more people today are pointing out that civics could be a solution for most of the country's foreseen problems. Estonian society is ready to participate widely and actively in developing an environment for civics.

ANNEX 1. Population processes in Estonia during the second half of the twentieth century

The annexation of Estonia by the USSR in 1940—and the Second World War—had a disastrous effect on the population. As a result of mass deportations (1940-41), war and mobilization (1941-45), as well as mass emigration, the population of Estonia decreased from 1,136,000 in October 1939 to 854,000 in January 1945. Repressions continued in the second half of the 1940s. Estonia lost a whole ethnic minority: in 1939-41, the local Germans left in response to Hitler's call. In 1943-44, as a result of a special agreement with Germany, the Swedes left en masse. Some 26,000 inhabitants (mainly Russians) were lost to Estonia when the border areas (over 2,000 sq. km), where they lived, were added to Russian Federation territory. In 1945, Estonians

FIGURE 1. Dynamics of the population of Estonia, 1970–96.



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formed approximately 94% of the population. Since the Soviet occupation, and especially after the war, the population composition has been influenced most by the colonial assimilation policies of the USSR. Hundreds of thousands of people were brought into Estonia from central Russia, the Ukraine and Byelorussia. In the period 1945-50 alone, the net migration was 240,000 people. In the whole period of Soviet occupation after the war, half a million more people came to Estonia than left. The percentage of Estonians in the population has dropped to 61.5%, according to the 1989 census. Russians form the largest minority (30.3%), followed by the Ukrainians (3.1%) and the Belorussians (1.8%). Heavy industry was introduced to Estonia by the central Soviet authorities. The factories were under all-Union control, their work- force consisting mainly of people brought into Estonia, and their output being largely for Soviet markets. The non-Estonian population is therefore dominant in the north eastern Estonian industrial towns: e g. Narva (96% non-Estonian). Estonians, however, form 87% of the rural population.

According to a 1989 census, the Estonian population is made up of 61.5%; Russians, 30.3%; Ukrainians, 3.1%; Byelorussians, 1.7%; Finns, 1.1%; and others (including Jews, Tatars, Germans, Latvians, and Poles), 2.3%.

ANNEX 2. Some statistics about Estonian schools and teaching staff—civics

In 1999/2000 there were 706 compulsory schools in Estonia in general. Seventy-nine were kindergarten-primary schools (up to class 3), ninety-three primary schools (classes 1 to 3), 294 middle schools (classes 1 to 9) and 240 gymnasium schools (classes 1 to 12). The total number of students was just over 210,000. In roughly 600 schools the language of instruction is Estonian; Russian in 100 schools. Some fifteen schools use both languages for teaching at the same time, having parallel Russian and Estonian classes.

Civics as a separate compulsory subject is taught in the forms 4, 9 and 12. This means that 534 schools (besides primary schools) with these classes should have a specialized civics teacher among the staff. The number of civics teachers in Estonian schools is approximately 400; in Russian schools 150. According to Ministry of Education data, in 2000/2001 there were altogether 18,278 teachers in the schools of Estonia; 79.1% of them have followed higher education, but the percentage of teachers with higher teacher training is only 66.9. Approximately 5% of teachers working in schools have only secondary education. Collecting exact data about the characteristics of civics teachers is underway currently, but we may estimate, that the figures are as shown in Table 1

TABLE 1. Dynamics of the number of schools in Estonia.

Study year	Total	Estonian	Russian	Mixed
1990/91	641	506	106	29
1991/92	666	530	108	28
1992/93	691	553	108	30
1993/94	724	581	113	30
1994/95	741	598	117	26
1995/96	742	600	116	26
1996/97	739	602	114	23
1997/98	730	596	111	23
1998/99	722	549	110	18
1999/2000	706	586	104	16

TABLE 2. Dynamics of the number of students in compulsory schools in Estonia by language of instruction.

Study year	Students total	Estonian schools		Russian schools	
		Students	%	Students	%
1990/1991	218,807	138,288	63.2	80,519	36.8
1991/1992	216,965	137,274	63.3	79,691	36.7
1992/1993	210,191	137,133	65.2	73,058	34.8
1993/1994	209,016	138,996	66.5	70,020	33.5
1994/1995	212,375	142,151	66.9	70,224	33.1
1995/1996	214,562	145,276	67.7	69,286	32.2
1996/1997	215,661	148,316	68.8	67,345	31.2
1997/1998	217,501	151,478	69.6	66,023	30.4
1998/1999	217,577	153,848	70.7	63,729	29.3
1999/2000	215,841	154,747	71.7	61,094	28.3

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TABLE 3. Teachers of compulsory schools by age groups.

	Total	< 30 (%)	30-50 (%)	>50 (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)
1997/98	16,813	11	54	36	15.5	84.5
1998/99	16,908	12	54	33	15.0	85.0
1999/2000	18,483	13	55	32	14.8	85.2
2000/01	18,278	11	55	34	14.5	85.5

TABLE 4. Changes in the syllabuses of civics in 1992, 1996 and 2001

Grade	Syllabus 1992	Syllabus 1996	Syllabus 2001
IV (V)	Nature. Man. Me. Myself and others. People's activities. Culture. Our contemporary world.	Man and man Man and time Man and money Local government Man and laws Man and mass media	By whom is society made. How the society is ruled. The main resources for running the society. People and the laws. People and information.
(VIII) IX	Man in society. The family. Education. The Republic of Estonia. A citizen's rights and duties Everyday life in Estonia.	Society. Law. Economics. Government.	Society as the form of human existence. Concept and functions of a State. Estonian state. People, Constitution and democracy. People, state and law. State and economics. Man and economics. Everybody's wellbeing
XI (XII)	Races, nations, religions. Population processes. The development of economics. The information society. Socialist societies and the changes after socialism. Poor and rich countries. Fiscal and economic policy. Education. Mass media. Elements of State power. Democracy and civil society. Types of states, forms of governments. Elections. Political trends in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Estonian statehood and our. neighbours. Local government. The rule of law. State defence. International relations.	The structure of society. The development and constitution of contemporary society. The governing of society. Society and economy. The individual and society. International relations.	Developing and constituting of the contemporary society. Structure of the contemporary society. Governing in the society. Basic economical principles in the society. Individual and the society. Diverse nature of the contemporary world. International communication and co-operation.

Social inclusion in compulsory schooling in Norway: reflections on the 1994 and 1997 reforms

Sissel Anderson

I. INTRODUCTION

The following text focuses on how the concept of social inclusion is being dealt with in connection with the compulsory school reforms in Norway during the 1990s. The idea of social inclusion is, however, by no means new in Norway; even before the Second World War pupils aged 7–14 attended one primary school for all. In accordance with our national objectives, values and principles, common curricula have been developed so that an average school class—if such a class exists—reflects to a certain extent the different strata and sections of the population. In brief, our response to social challenges and problems that arise is to differentiate and adjust the class in co-operation with parents and school advisers.

Thus, we will refer to recent compulsory school reforms in Norway. It should be mentioned, however, that Norway is a sparsely populated country and that many of the primary and lower secondary schools are small. It is not unusual for children of different grades to share a classroom (this is true of half the primary schools in Norway). Many primary and lower secondary schools are combined and all ten grades are taught in the same premises.

The Compulsory School Reform for primary and lower secondary levels (L97) came into force on 1 July 1997 (following the Compulsory School Reform for upper secondary level from 1994, *Reform 94*). The most important changes are: school starting at the age of 6 (instead of 7); ten years of schooling (instead of nine); and a new curriculum. The objective is that all children will receive an education that equips them to meet the challenges of the future and will grow up in an environment that generates self-confidence and security.

The objectives of compulsory education are laid down in a general curriculum for primary and lower secondary school expressed in the national *Curriculum guidelines* (L97), comprising:

- the curriculum for primary and secondary education, as well as the general curriculum for adult education;
- principles and guidelines for education in primary and lower secondary schools;
- the curriculum for specific subjects.

Primary and lower secondary schools are founded on the principle of a unified education system with equal and adaptable education for all in a co-ordinated school system based on a single general curriculum. All children and young people share a common pool of knowledge, culture and basic values.

The curriculum guidelines set out the subjects to be taught and the syllabus for each subject that all pupils are supposed to follow. The amount of common material increases in scope from grade to grade and reaches a peak at the lower secondary level. At the same time, schools are expected to adapt the guidelines to their own needs and to modify teaching in accordance with local conditions and individual pupils' needs.

II. BACKGROUND FOR THE REFORMS

Major changes have taken place in Norwegian society over the last couple of generations. Technological advances, industrial development, economic growth and the principle of social equality have been important driving forces in the development of a modern welfare society. Widespread expansion of the education sector, longer periods of education and improvements in the quality of education have been absolute prerequisites to achieve such a development and to ensure equal opportunities and prospects for all.

On the threshold of a new millennium, there is an explosive demand for technology, knowledge and information. This imposes new challenges and new demands on society, and on each one of us. The most important challenge may be this: will we be able to control the development of society ourselves or will we be shaped by that development?

This challenge certainly applies to the school. If the school is to help ensure that future developments adopt the right course, it cannot stand still itself, but must be able to adjust and 'grow' all the time.

1. Developing social human beings

It is considered to be important that the school is a community where social skills are inculcated. It must be structured in such a way that the learners' activities have

consequences for others, so that they can learn from the impact of their decisions. The school must find the difficult balance between stimulating and exploiting the culture that young people themselves create, and forming a counterweight to it. Changes in the social circumstances of childhood and adolescence mean that the ways of working and social relations built into the education system have an even greater significance for the learners' growth. Experience from practical work and apprenticeship is a model to be followed throughout the education system.

Learners and apprentices should participate in a broad spectrum of activities in which all have duties towards the group, including practice in standing in front of the others to present a case, making plans for a project, putting them into effect and seeing a job done. This implies that learners—from the first day of school, and increasingly with age—must have duties and responsibilities, not only for the sake of their own benefit and growth, but also as an obligation to classmates and other members of the school community. Such assignments should cover the whole range from the 'buddy system' to looking after younger pupils and helping them out, accountability for tidiness and hygiene, contributing to class events and meetings, assisting at mealtimes, etc.

The aim of this type of training is to develop empathy and sensitivity towards others, to build skill in assessing social situations and to promote responsibility for others' well-being. Those who have been insufficiently stimulated at home or in their neighbourhood must be given the opportunity to become mature in a learning environment where learners take responsibility for one another's development. Taking part in creating a microcosm of companionship advances personal maturation, especially when it entails co-operation between persons at different levels or with different aptitudes or talents. Pupils should therefore enlist in practical work, both as providers and recipients of services. They should get into the habit of taking responsibility for the society in which they find themselves today as preparation for participation in that of tomorrow. Everyone shares responsibility for a learning environment that shows consideration for the needs of others and a respect for learning.

Much of the readiness for adult life that the young previously acquired through their duties in extended families and their tasks in the working world they must now gain in the course of their schooling. Hence, today's education must encompass:

- experience in making decisions that have direct and clear consequences for others. This implies training in making and following rules, practice in making decisions in complicated situations, exercising 'crisis skills', i.e. the ability to act when faced with unexpected problems or unfamiliar tasks, etc. Taken together, these represent coaching in social responsibility.
- experience with work where interdependence demands discipline and where an individual's efforts influence the outcome of the work of others. This requires the development of organizational skills, such as the ability to co-ordinate work, to lead activities, to follow directions and to suggest alternative solutions.
- experience with the school community: knowledge about problems that may be perceived as being personal are in fact shared by many and hence can only be resolved through co-operation or by organizational change. Such experience teaches children how conflicts can be confronted and settled, how to advocate one's own and other's interests, and how to stand up against opposition and persevere against odds. In this connection, learners must also gain experience in contacting the authorities and the media.

The school is a society in miniature that should be exploited to attain such skills. The learners must be spurred to engage in its decision-making processes, for their ability to participate is strengthened by experience. This is essential in modern societies with their complex institutions.

In our opinion, education must be dedicated to the personal qualities we wish to develop and not solely to learning subject matter. The key is to create an environment that provides ample opportunities for children and young people to evolve social responsibility and practical capability for their future roles as adults. The school as a learning environment goes beyond formal education in the classroom and the relationship between teacher and pupil. A broad and nurturing learning environment encompasses all interactions between adults and learners and is founded on a common understanding of the aims of education. The social relations among the pupils and the values embedded in the youth culture are integral parts of the learning environment. Indeed, peer culture constrains and gives scope to what the school is able to achieve.

Parents have the primary responsibility for bringing up and educating their children. This cannot be left to the school; it should consist of collaboration between the school and the home. The school must, with the endorsement and collaboration of the parents, complement the children's education—and it must engage the parents in developing the milieu at school and in the local community. If the parents stand aloof from the school and have no direct contact with each other, the school cannot make use of their social resources to influence the conditions for growth and the climate of values surrounding it. At a time when the extended family is playing a lesser role in the lives of the young, and the media have filled the vacancy left by parents who are at work, more active mobilization of parents is needed to strengthen the school's and the learners' social and normative habitat. For schools to function well, it is not only necessary that learners know each other; the parents must also know both each other and each other's children. This is essential if they are to be able to establish common standards for their children's activities and behaviour. The school must, with the endorsement and collaboration of the parents, complement the children's education—and it must engage the parents in developing the milieu at school and in the local community.

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The local community, with its natural surroundings and industry, is itself a vital part of the school's learning environment. The young derive impulses and experience from the community on their own, which the school must employ and enrich through the curriculum. For technical skills, apprenticeships are vital; training for working life should take place through working life. Nevertheless, education must in general initiate contact with the school's neighbourhood and utilize the resources and the know-how that exist there. The school should function as an active source of energy and culture for the local community, and promote not only contact between adults and children, but also with local services and industry.

III. A HOLISTIC VIEW

1. The provision of a general, solid and relevant body of knowledge

To come back to the main aspects of our school reforms, I would like to emphasize that we see equal rights to education as extremely important in our developmental work. In addition, we want to avoid class distinctions and provide the best education for the largest number, within, of course, the limits of available resources.

We have now introduced ten years of compulsory education from the age of 6. We want to improve the development and enhancement of people's talents. We want to provide for a general, solid and relevant body of knowledge, to maintain a broad concept of knowledge and a satisfactory balance between general knowledge and specialization.

Another important objective is to create closer links between upper secondary education and life in the community and at work. Likewise, we try to give the schools greater responsibility for the environment in which children grow, and richer impulses and wider scope for learning, based on activities organized together with adults, and on children's own independent activities, thus creating a secure environment for children while their parents are at work.

Norway has a long tradition of creating an accepted basis of common values and culture through education and in gradually developing a sense of responsibility for others as part of the learning process. The reforms have led to greater emphasis on the comprehensive role of the school in the local community, and we want to continue developing the scope for local adaptation together with the development of international co-responsibility and ecological understanding.

Our school reforms have reviewed content, teaching and learning throughout the entire thirteen-year period. They are also cultural reforms, whereby more activities in the local community, including crafts, sports and artistic endeavour, become a part of the day-to-day life of schools. Last, but not least, greater emphasis is being laid on special education as part of the all-inclusive school and on individual teaching programmes as a tool for special education.

2. From kindergarten to adult education

The reforms in the primary and lower secondary school are part of a more extensive programme of reforms.

A system of extended leave has been introduced for parents with small children. By this system, each parent may take one year of unpaid leave for each child, in addition to the statutory paid leave to which they are entitled in connection with pregnancy, birth or adoption of a child under 10 years of age. A 'time account system' has also been introduced whereby the paid leave can be taken over time, combined with reduced working hours. The goal of full kindergarten coverage is not too far from being realized. A national framework plan has been introduced for the kindergarten. The Child Welfare Service has been strengthened. The system of organized after-school activities has been extended, and will apply to children between the ages of 6 and 9 years of age. Since The Compulsory School Reform of 1994, all young people have had a right to three years of upper secondary education. A network has been established between the regional colleges to encourage specialization and division of work, and teacher education is being revised. The government also has another goal, namely to ensure opportunities for further education and in-service training for adults.

The educational reforms have a common objective: to ensure quality, coherence and continuity of education.

3. The new curriculum and schooling

Some of the main objectives behind the 1997 reform were:

- an emphasis on compulsory school as a school for all, balancing the desire to promote social solidarity with the need to adapt education to each individual;
- organization of the subject matter—a structure with greater emphasis on a common curriculum, combined with adaptation to individual needs and local conditions;
- stronger emphasis on equal value and gender equality.

Accordingly, the curriculum is based on two main principles:

- All pupils are taught the same basic, centrally defined subject matter, which is gradually extended throughout the course of schooling. The common content of the subject syllabuses may contain local supplements and shall be suitably adapted to each individual pupil.
- Education shall reflect a progression that ensures good coherence and development, adjusted to the abilities and aptitudes of the pupils in each age group.

The content of the curriculum is organized into subjects. Nevertheless, the different subjects should be considered in relation to each other, and transversal connections should be encouraged.

The new curriculum (L97) consists of three parts. It contains: (i) a general part, which defines the over-riding objectives for all activities in the school; (ii) a document laying down the principles; and (iii) guidelines for the teaching and a set of subject syllabuses defining the objectives and the content of the education in each subject.

The schooling is divided into three stages: the initial stage (grades 1-4), the intermediate stage (grades 5-7) and the lower secondary stage (grades 8-10). Especially during the lower secondary stage, the pupils shall be given good practice in theme-based learning and project work. This education shall be a preparation for further education and an occupation. At all three stages, education shall pay attention to the need for practical work.

Assessed in a holistic perspective *Reform 97* is:

- a school-oriented reform that lowers school entry to age 6, extends compulsory education to ten years and gives the compulsory school a new curriculum;
- a child-oriented reform that makes the school responsible for helping to provide a good developmental environment, providing a wealth of impulses and opportunities for learning and play and a variety of activities, in the company of adults in different roles;
- a family-oriented reform that emphasizes collaboration between the home, the school and the local community, and the further expansion of the system of organized after-school activities so that children may feel safe and happy when their parents are at work;
- a cultural reform, with an emphasis on the aesthetic dimension and the need to learn about different cultures while at school, partly through interaction between the school and the local community.

In addition to increasing the range of options available and improving the quality, the reforms are intended to create a more integrated and better co-ordinated system. From the autumn of 1994, all young people between the ages of 16 and 19 were given the right to three years of upper secondary education, qualifying them for an occupation and/or higher education. This education normally provides vocational skills or qualifies students for college or university studies.

Upper secondary education covers all education and training between lower secondary school and higher education. In Norway, young people have a right to a place in one of the basic areas of study that they have chosen. The reform has made it easier for pupils who first choose vocational training to gain access to college and university. The reform has also given local governments responsibility for following up any young people in the 16 to 19 age groups who neither attend school nor have a job.

4. Adapted education

The principle of one school for all is based on a balance between consideration for the community and adapted education for the individual.

The principle of an all-inclusive school is that all pupils should receive equitable education based on a common curriculum and the principle of suitably adapted education, as established by law. This principle shall be reflected in all areas of the school's activity.

The subject syllabuses provide opportunities for adjustment to local conditions. It is important that the school should make use of the resources existing in the local community, and make sure that the school becomes a 'centre' for local activities. Good coherence must be ensured between the subject matter taught throughout the country and the subject matter chosen locally.

Schools with few classes (more than one grade in each class) should be free to organize the common subject matter flexibly for each main stage of the schooling. At the lower secondary stage, the subject matter should preferably be taught in the grade for which it is intended.

5. 'One school for all', with a degree of integration

The over-riding principle for Norwegian compulsory education is that all children—regardless of where they live, their gender, social background, ethnic affiliation or aptitudes and abilities—shall have the same right to education, and shall receive this education in the local school.

This means that almost all Norwegian children attend the local school, and cannot be removed from there and placed in another school (whether this be another school in the regular system of education or one of the few remaining special schools), except on the initiative of either the parents or the school. No child can be removed from the local school against the wishes of the parents.

Thirteen national resource centres of special education have been established to provide advice and support in the following areas: visual impairment, hearing impairment, speech and communication disorders, learning disorders and dyslexia, and behavioural and emotional disorders. In addition, seven regional centres have been established for persons with severe behavioural and emotional disorders, including mental disability. The centres provide advice, information and training, and carry out surveys and innovation work.

6. Pupils with special needs

As a consequence of this, all children shall, as far as possible, receive an education that takes into account their own special aptitudes and abilities.

Pupils with special educational needs have a right to special education after an assessment by experts has shown this to be necessary. The Educational/Psychological Service in the municipality is the advisory body in this connection. Normally, when it has been decided that a pupil needs special education, a special teaching programme is prepared to suit his or her specific needs. Such a programme should be prepared in co-operation with the parents and the pupil

concerned. It must also be emphasized that pupils with special needs shall also take part in the social, educational and cultural community of the school.

Needless to say, disabled pupils have a right to more than three years of upper secondary education.

7. Language minorities

The objective applying to the primary and lower secondary school in general—to give everyone a broad and general education—is also a fundamental principle for the education of pupils from language minorities. Teaching shall help the pupils to take part in the community as equal and active members. It shall also help to stimulate the language development of the pupils in accordance with their own aptitudes and abilities.

The rise in the number of immigrants has increased the proportion of pupils belonging to minority language groups in State schools. There is broad political consensus that the school system should safeguard the needs of language minorities.

Pupils belonging to language minorities are to be given instruction that provides them with opportunities for further education and participation in the job market. Nordic co-operation on teaching pupils belonging to language minorities has been established under the direction of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

8. Saami culture, languages and social life

The Saami are an ethnic minority; there are actually three Saami languages. Education for Saami pupils shall make them feel proud of their own culture, and shall promote the Saami language and identity. The schooling shall, at the same time, make sure that Saami pupils are able to participate actively in the community and receive education at all levels. In order to realize the objective and principles defined for the education of Saami pupils, a specially adapted curriculum has been prepared—*L97 Saami*.

Saami as a first, second or foreign language is offered throughout the public school system (from age 6 to age 18). Since Saami culture and social life are part of the common heritage that all pupils in the Norwegian compulsory school should learn about, Saami culture, language, history and social life comprise part of the common content of the different subjects.

9. Subjects and lessons

The '97 curriculum contains new syllabuses for all subjects except for the teaching of their mother-tongue to pupils from language-minority groups. The earlier optional subjects have been replaced by so-called additional subjects, which can be chosen by the school or by the pupils themselves and are offered in the lower secondary school. There are three alternatives: learning an additional language (e.g. German, Finnish or French, in addition to English), learning a compulsory language (in practice Norwegian, English or, for children from language minorities, the mother-tongue) in more detail, or doing practical project work. The choices made by the school or the pupils shall have a local profile and the syllabus is to be designed by each individual school in accordance with the objectives of the curriculum.

Finnish as second language is now offered in schools with pupils of Finnish stock in the counties of Troms and Finnmark. Finnish can also be chosen as a foreign language in schools in other parts of the country.

Alternative subjects and timetables are available for pupils with Saami as first or second language and for pupils with sign language as a first language.

10. Pupil assessment

The Norwegian Government has published a White Paper containing principles and guidelines for assessment of pupils in the ten-year compulsory school. It is underlined that pupil assessment shall be an integrated and on-going part of the learning process. The assessment should reflect the objectives, subject matter and ways of working emphasized in the teaching. The most important purpose of the assessment is to promote the pupil's learning and development.

The government proposes that the primary and lower secondary school should use two forms of assessment:

- An assessment not involving marks shall be used at all stages of schooling. At the lower secondary stage, pupils shall also be assessed by means of marks, using the same scale of marks as in the upper secondary school. All assessments shall emphasize the advisory aspect, and it is particularly important that the assessment by marks be supplemented by verbal and written guidance.
- The assessments made in the daily teaching shall be supplemented by prepared talks between teacher, pupil and parents. These talks shall lead to a summary that is binding as a basis for the further work. The teacher shall also give a more comprehensive written assessment, with advice, at regular intervals.

The pupils must take an active part in the assessments, and must be encouraged to recognize the connection between the choices they make and the results they achieve.

11. Organized after-school activities

In many families, both parents are absent from the home in paid employment and need a place where their children can feel happy and safe after ordinary school hours. The system of organized after-school activities is a step in meeting this need.

The main objective is to provide good conditions for play, care, and supervision, and opportunities to take part

in cultural activities. The activities are arranged at the local school or in suitable premises nearby. They are usually organized by the municipality, but sometimes by private persons or organizations. The municipal authorities shall approve both arrangements. Both systems may be subsidized by the central government.

12. Academic education and vocational training

Upper secondary education has been made available over the whole country to ensure that all young people have the same opportunities for education and training at this level. Until the reform of 1976 there were a variety of schools offering different types of education and training, but these were replaced by a single system, which provides both an academic education and vocational training, often in the same school building. Equal weight and status are given to theoretical education and practical training, and they are organized into thirteen areas of study in the first year. Specialization starts in a later phase with the so-called advanced courses I and II and in apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships have been incorporated into the upper secondary school education system. Instruction takes place through a combination of school attendance and work experience. In the first two years, instruction is given at school, while the final specialized phase (lasting up to two years) is provided as on-the-job training. If no private apprenticeships can be found, it is the duty of the local government to offer specialized training in the form of an advanced course at school. A journeyman's final examination is the same whether the final phase of training took place on the job or in school.

* * *

Without going into detail in every respect, I have tried to present the guidelines behind our school reforms, in which social inclusion plays a dominant role. Only pupils who have acquired social skills can become active and responsible participants in a democratic process.

Curriculum development for social inclusion in Sweden

Mai Beijer and Staffan Bolin

Schools have an important duty to make students aware of the fundamental values on which Swedish society is built: the sanctity of human life, the freedom and integrity of the individual, the equal value of all irrespective of gender, race, religion or social background, equality between women and men, and solidarity with the weak and vulnerable.[1]

I. DEFINING SOCIAL INCLUSION

1. What is meant by social inclusion?

The definition of 'social inclusion' with regard to the field of education applied in Sweden is 'a school for everyone'. What this entails in concrete terms is that we have laws guaranteeing that all children and young people living in Sweden have access to formal education free of charge, irrespective of where they live or to which ethnic or other minority or majority group they belong. These laws also apply to children and young people who are seeking asylum in Sweden, while they are waiting for an answer from the authorities as to whether or not they may stay in the country.

The municipal authorities are required by law to make places in the following forms of education available to all children and young people:

- **one year in a pre-school class (age 6 years).** This is a year of preparation for school. Parents may choose whether or not they wish their children to attend a pre-school class; most children do attend.
- **nine years of compulsory education at comprehensive school (age 7–16).** Most children start in the first class at the age of 7. Attendance at school is compulsory, and municipal authorities are required to ensure that all children of compulsory school age go to their lessons. The one exception to this rule is provided by children whose families are seeking asylum in Sweden: these children are guaranteed a place at school, but they may choose not to attend (although the vast majority of children in this situation do, in fact, attend school).
- **three years of upper secondary school (age 17–20).** All young people are guaranteed a place to study within the framework of the integrated upper secondary school. In order to qualify for a place on one of the seventeen 'national study programmes', students must have gained at least a 'pass' grade in Swedish/Swedish-as-a-second-language, mathematics and English on completing year nine at compulsory school. Students who do not attain this level are guaranteed a place on the 'individual study programme', which enables them to complement their comprehensive school education, acquire basic proficiency in Swedish, take individual courses from different national study programmes and, if they so wish, to combine their studies with practical work experience. After completing compulsory comprehensive school, 97% of all young people elect to begin a course of study at upper secondary level; however, some of them discontinue their studies without acquiring any upper-secondary level qualifications.

Sweden has a strong tradition of adult education provision. Every municipality provides education for adults at both comprehensive-school and upper-secondary level. Those who for different reasons have not completed their formal education while of school age are entitled to follow courses of this kind free of charge within the framework of the National Adult Education Programme.

The ideological foundation for 'A school for everyone' is provided by the idea that all children and young people have the right to attend an integrated school at both the basic levels of education (the pre-school class and comprehensive school) and at upper secondary level, where they can choose academically or vocationally oriented study programmes. All the political parties in the Swedish Parliament backed the decision taken in 1962 to introduce an integrated nine-year comprehensive school that replaced the previous system consisting of parallel forms of school education. In 1972, the academically oriented upper secondary schools were merged with certain kinds of vocational training college to form a system of integrated upper secondary education. Since 1994, all upper secondary study programmes have been three years in duration. Fifteen of the seventeen national study programmes are primarily intended to prepare students for working life, including the industrial, the arts, and the health-care programmes, whereas the social science and natural science programmes prepare students for further studies. All students, irrespective of the programme they have selected, study an 'A' course in eight core subjects (Swedish/Swedish-as-a-second-language, English, mathematics, natural science, civics, the arts, physical education and health, and religious knowledge). All national programmes offer students the necessary qualifications for further study in higher education.

At many locations around Sweden this system means that all children and young people go to the same school, thus guaranteeing that children from differing backgrounds are in contact with each other. However, in areas where there is housing segregation, this segregation is also

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reflected at school: what we see today is that in the socially and ethnically segregated districts of the major cities there are schools where the proportion of students from an immigrant background is close to 100%, and in medium-sized municipalities we can see schools where the proportion of students from an immigrant background, although not quite this large, is nevertheless considerable.[2] In these areas the unemployment rate amongst the adult population is higher than average, and a large proportion of families are dependent on various kinds of social welfare benefits. The result of these factors is that these areas are marked by marginalization. As far as formal education is concerned, this entails a need for special initiatives if the schools in these areas are to be able to prepare their students for an adult life in which they will participate in and take responsibility for society.

Education in Sweden is generally publicly financed and exempt from fees. Since the early 1990s, there have been greater opportunities to start up what are called 'independent schools' (which are also financed from public funds, but are not managed by the municipal authorities). These schools often have their own 'profile', and therefore attract parents from, for example, a given ethnic, religious or language group. Thus, in their everyday school life, students attending such schools only meet children of their own age who come from a similar cultural background and share the same values as themselves. Independent schools may not charge fees, but nevertheless there are independent schools that are mainly chosen by parents with a high level of education and a relatively high income. And although independent schools with a specific 'profile' are at present mainly to be found in the major cities, the growing number of this category of school nevertheless presents us with new challenges in our desire to ensure that all children and young people receive an education which prepares them for life in a society to an ever-increasing extent characterized by cultural and ethnic diversity.[3]

II. PATTERNS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Which social groups are most affected by various forms of discrimination and social exclusion? What are the main vulnerability factors which pose a threat to social cohesion in the Baltic region and Scandinavia? What are the challenges posed to education systems by the phenomenon of social exclusion?

The groups in Sweden at greatest risk of suffering from social exclusion are those which can be described as being marginalized. By the term 'marginalized' we refer to people—of both Swedish and non-Swedish origin—who are excluded from full social, cultural, economic and political participation in society. Children from families of this kind are over-represented both in the category of children who do not reach the minimum standard set down for education at compulsory comprehensive school, and in the category of children who do not go on to upper secondary school or who start but do not complete a programme of study at upper-secondary level. It is also these children who run the greatest risk of themselves being caught in drug abuse and criminality. We can also add that it is among these groups of young people that extreme right-wing and racist organizations recruit new members.

One example of a marginalized group within Swedish society is that of immigrants who are not able to find a place in the employment market. It is a fact that all newly-arrived immigrants find it harder to gain employment than native Swedes. Many employers, despite the fact that Swedish law prohibits discriminating against immigrants, will give a job to a Swedish applicant rather than to one with an immigrant background. How successful newly-arrived immigrants are at establishing themselves in the employment market also depends on the prevailing economic climate. When, in the 1960s and early 1970s, Sweden was in need of labour in the industrial sector, Swedish companies went out to countries such as Finland, Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey and persuaded above all 'skilled workers' to move to Sweden. Of course, even then there were people in the native Swedish population who felt uncertain about 'the foreigners', but it was relatively easy for school staff, for example, to explain to native Swedish pupils the reasons behind the presence of these new groups in Swedish society. However, in an economic situation where newly-arrived immigrants are in fact competing with native Swedes for the available jobs, it is not so straightforward. This uncertainty is not only visible among industrial workers or those without qualifications; it is just as prevalent among representatives of occupations which require a relatively high level of education and training. Suddenly the dividing lines between 'us' and 'them' seem very clear! In the early 1990s, Sweden experienced an economic slump and at the same time accepted relatively large groups of immigrants, primarily Somalians, Yugoslavs and Kurds from Iraq, and our experience shows that those immigrants who do not succeed in gaining a foothold in the employment market relatively soon after arriving in Sweden are at risk of ending up in a situation of more or less permanent passivity and dependence on welfare benefits. All too often this then leads to other problems, such as drug abuse, family difficulties and sometimes even active criminality. Among immigrants who have not had the opportunity to build up long-term contacts within Swedish society, there is a breeding ground in which suspicion may grow vis-à-vis the society that has marginalized them. This suspicion may lead to a rejection of the values that provide the foundation, the common ground, on which Swedish society is built. When adults have these kinds of problems, there is always a spill-over with regard to their children's school educationæand since immigrant families frequently do not have social networks which can help them in times of crisis, the children of immigrants with social problems are even more vulnerable.

One particular group in Swedish society that has been subjected to long-term discrimination and marginalization is the Roma. The Romany population in Sweden consists of Roma who have come to the country at different times and from different countries. The Roma are now recognized

as an official national minority in Sweden, and as a result an awareness is developing within the Romany population that they themselves need to take initiatives to ensure that they can become better able to earn their own livelihood, at the same time as they are endeavouring to find new ways of preserving their own culture. However, many schools still experience difficulties in making sure that Romany students complete their education, at both compulsory and upper-secondary level.

The Saami (Lappish) population in northern Sweden has also suffered long-term discrimination, although this has been expressed in partially different ways than in the case of the Roma. The main form of discrimination to which the Saami have been exposed has been attempted assimilation, the result of which is that there are now large groups of Saami who are no longer fluent speakers of their mother-tongue. However, like the Roma, the Saami, together with the Tornedal community in northern Sweden (who speak a dialect of Finnish), native Finnish-speakers and the Jewish community, are now also recognized as an official national minority, and as part of this status the Swedish State has committed itself to working to provide these communities with greater opportunities to use their respective mother-tongues in various contexts in society.

III. EDUCATIONAL RESPONSES

What are the various experiences of educational reform in general, and of reform of curriculum content in particular, in responding to these challenges? How are life-skills contextualized and what place do they occupy in educational strategies to promote social inclusion? How do these appear in curriculum frameworks and in various curriculum areas?

1. Basic values in the national curricula

In Sweden, the State governs education through a series of statutes, government orders, curricula and syllabuses. These contain aims and guidelines for all aspects of education. The curriculum for compulsory formal education starts with a section on the fundamental values and tasks of school. The quotations here are from the *Curriculum for compulsory school, the pre-school class and after-school recreation centres*, a document known as *Lpo 94*. There are similar passages in the *Curriculum for nursery education, Lpfö 98*, as well as in the *Curriculum for non-compulsory* [i.e. upper-secondary level] *school education, Lpf 94*.

Fundamental values

- Democracy forms the basis of the national school system. The Education Act (1985:1100) stipulates that all school activity should be carried out in accordance with fundamental democratic values and that each and everyone working in school should encourage respect for the intrinsic value of each person, as well as for the environment we all share (Section 1, Sub-section 2).
- School has the important task of inculcating in pupils those fundamental values on which our society is based. The inviolability of human life, individual freedom and integrity, the equal value of all people, equality between women and men, and solidarity with the weak and vulnerable are all values that school should represent and impart. In accordance with the ethics borne by Christian tradition and Western humanism, this is achieved by fostering in the individual a sense of justice, generosity of spirit, tolerance and responsibility.
- Education in school shall be non-denominational.
- It is a duty of school to encourage all pupils to discover their own uniqueness as individuals, and from that basis to actively participate in social life by giving of their best in a spirit of responsible freedom.

Understanding and compassion for others

Concern for the welfare and development of the individual should characterize all school activity. Schools must also actively resist any tendency towards bullying or persecution. Xenophobia and intolerance must be actively confronted with knowledge, open discussion and effective measures. The internationalization of Swedish society and increasing cross-border mobility place great demands on people's ability to live together and appreciate the values that are to be found in cultural diversity. School is a social and cultural meeting place with both the opportunity and the responsibility to foster this ability among all who work there.

The other headings in this first section of the curriculum are: 'Objectivity and open approaches', 'An education of equal value', 'Rights and obligations', 'The duties of the school', and 'A good environment for development and learning'. Section Two is entitled *Goals and guidelines* and embraces the following: 'Norms and values', 'Knowledge, responsibility and influence of pupils', 'School and home', 'Transition and co-operation', 'School and society', 'Assesment and grades', and 'Responsibility of head-teachers'.[4]

2. Measures addressed to all those who work in education

The basis of shared values mentioned above constitutes the foundation on which the organization and content of formal education are built. The national curricula present instructions, and every individual school is expected to work to ensure that these fundamental values permeate all features of their work. At the national level, the National Agency for Education has drawn up course syllabuses for the subjects taught at school, and has compiled various kinds of supplementary material that illuminate different aspects of this shared foundation of common values. For example, the parliamentary decision to accord official status as national minorities to the five minority communities mentioned above led to a revision of the syllabuses in Swedish and history. Other examples of measures which address all pupils/students and which place a focus on participation and the development of common values are presented in the following documents:

IV. DEMOCRACY IN SWEDISH EDUCATION

1. Skolverket 2000, ISBN 91-89314-05-0

This report is a presentation and critical examination of the efforts being made in the Swedish child-care and school sector to promote a common code of fundamental democratic values. The material is based on earlier reports from the National Agency for Education on this subject, focusing on evaluation, inspection, analysis and support. The book is intended as an aid to further discussions of the opportunities, problems, skills and requirements involved in the promotion of democratic values in education.

- ***The living history project: tell your children.*** A book about the Holocaust in Europe 1933–45.
  The Living History Project, http://www.levandehistoria.org/english and *Tell Your Children, ISBN 91-630-6385-9*. The book is also available in Swedish, Arabic, Turkish, Finnish, Spanish, Farsi, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian.
  In 1997, a study was published which showed that only about 60% of young people in Sweden thought that the Holocaust had definitely happened. Sweden's prime minister, Gøran Persson, says that when he read this he felt so worried and angry that the very same day he decided to do something and drew up a plan that he presented to Parliament. This was the beginning of the large-scale information campaign called 'Living history' and the book 'Tell your children'. This book was sent out, free of charge, to every home in the country in which there were children of school age; to date over 1 million copies of the book have been distributed. The book describes what human beings are capable of doing to other human beings when democratic values have been destroyed and replaced by an ideology advocating intolerance, hate and violence. The book provides a source of support for everyone who, at home or at school, wants to talk to young people about very difficult issues which involve fundamental values.
  The work goes on. For 2002, the Government has given 10 million SEK to youth organizations who are going to carry out projects for combatting racism and xenophobia.
- ***Far away, close at hand.*** The new curricula and the concept of internationalization. *Skolverket 1996, ISBN 91-88373-34-7*
  This book looks at internationalization as reflected and incorporated in the national curricula. Four authors explain how they would define the concept of internationalization/intercultural education, and what they see as its consequences for schools and education. There follows a discussion of how the curricula deal with the concept and the reality of internationalization, and there are examples of specific areas of study and other dimensions involved.
- ***The multicultural park.*** A study of common values at school and in society.
  Skolverket 1999, ISBN 91-89313-48-8
  Multiculturalism is one of the most intensely debated concerns of society today. The questions we find ourselves obliged to confront include: In what ways should multiculturalism influence the content of school education? How should we interpret the concept of value community, and what organizational forms should schools adopt in a multicultural context? These questions provide the point of departure for this book, which looks at examples taken from Sweden as well as taking into account international scholarly debate.

Life-skills include also skills related to communication. The school plays a critical role in providing a learning environment for children to become 'good readers and writers'. Teaching children to achieve this involves a number of factors covering various approaches, structures and focuses on goals combined with encouragement and a highly supportive attitude.

- ***Good reading and writing skills—for realising individual potential***
  Skolverket 1999, ISBN 91-89313-17-8
  This book maps key ingredients of successful teaching practice and approaches as developed and used in ordinary Swedish schools.
- ***Language room—Creative language settings***
  A presentation from the development project for school libraries and for schools' creative languages settings, Skolverket, 2001

The National Agency for Education has been instructed by the government to strive to support efforts by schools and pre-schools to improve their reading and writing settings. One principal part of that task is to strengthen and enhance the teaching role of the school libraries.

Other important areas of study for life-skills are: preventing bullying and promoting good social relationships; personal relations and health education; and anti-drug education. In this field, the National Agency has compiled the following reports:

- ***It has to keep you thinking.*** Health work in Swedish schools: from directives to perspectives. Skolverket, 2001. ISBN 91-89314-37-9.
  In this publication you can find short presentations of the following three reports. The book summarizes the work of the National Agency for Education in the field of education and health from 1993 until the first half of 2001. During these eight years much has happened that entails changes in schools' work on health: changes in perspectives, ways of working and status, as well as the development of collaboration with other organizations and authorities.
- ***Kränk mig inte!*** [Don't insult me!]
  Skolverket, 1995. [Only available in Swedish.]
  This material on bullying and how it can be prevented was published in 1995. It consists of a summary of experiences from schools that obtained funding for projects to counter bullying. The aim is to promote the twin goals of preventing bullying and promoting good social relationships among pupils, as well as between pupils and teachers.
- ***Man vet inte var trappstegen är i livet*** [Where are the steps on life's ladder?]
  Skolverket, 2000. [Only available in Swedish.]
  Tobacco, alcohol and drugs are considered in the wider context of school's educational work. The interviews with pupils make it clear that credibility is health education's Achilles' heel.
- ***Love! You can really feel it, you know!*** Talking about sexuality and personal relationships at school. Skolverket, 2000, ISBN 91-88372-99-5.
  This reference material, commissioned by the government in 1993 to replace a manual from 1977, was published in Swedish in 1995. The importance of discussions led by the teacher is emphasized, and interviews with girls and boys give a clear youth perspective. The book has been translated for use in a number of different countries, ranging from Estonia to Japan! In 1997, the World Association for Sexology awarded the book an honourable mention as 'the best sexuality education programme'.

2. Measures addressed to specific groups

The Swedish language plays such a central role in Swedish society that it is impossible to participate in social life or to establish oneself in the employment market without a good level of proficiency in the Swedish language. All newly arrived immigrants aged 16 and above have the right to receive Swedish-language tuition. This type of education is known as Swedish for Immigrants (SFI). The aim is to provide immigrants with basic skills in Swedish.

All students with a mother-tongue other than Swedish can study Swedish-as-a-second-language throughout their time at comprehensive and upper secondary school. The subject 'Swedish-as-a-second-language' (SSL) has its own syllabus, and is equal in value to the subject 'Swedish' when students, for example, are applying for a place at university or college.

Students with a mother-tongue other than Swedish also have the right to receive tuition in their native language as a school subject. The thinking behind this provision is the conviction that having a positive sense of being rooted in one's own culture provides a secure identity, which in turn makes it possible for students to develop their ability to empathize with the values and conditions of others.

Moreover, society stands to gain if students can acquire multilingual skills. The efforts being made by the European Union and the European Council of Ministers to promote developments in the teaching of modern languages have also had a positive impact on the willingness of Swedish society to provide native-language tuition for pupils who belong to the five national minorities or come from a non-Swedish background.

> On the website: http://modersmal.skolverket.se, which primarily addresses itself to teachers of the mother-tongue, parents and students, there is information about the regulations relating to mother-tongue tuition, methodological advice and suggestions, and links to websites that teachers of the various languages have selected as being of interest to teachers and students. Work on this website began in the first half of 2001, and it can still be seen as a 'construction site'—it is incomplete. At present, work is in progress on ten different languages (not all of which are visible yet when visiting the site) and the intention is that the website will eventually expand to embrace twenty to twenty-five different languages. We have already noted that the site has had a positive effect on the status of mother-tongue studies as a school subject, and that it has given teachers of the mother-tongue a stronger sense of their importance.

3. Initiatives for the education of the Roma

A few years ago, the government gave the Agency special instructions to support the development of education for Romany students. This work is carried out in close collaboration with representatives of the Roma, and consists of development initiatives in the following three areas:

1. Support for the development of the dialects of Romany represented in Sweden, for example by means of the work on a computerized Romany wordbase.
2. Development of educational materials in different dialects of Romani. To date the Agency has published seven sets of materials, and a further five are in the development stage. All of these materials have been conceived by representatives of the Romany community—the role of the Agency has been to provide pedagogical and financial support.
3. Competence development for Roma working in education. There is a great shortage of Roma qualified to work in education, and the work of the Agency in this respect is two-pronged: in the short term, initiatives to provide immediate assistance to those who are working in nursery and school education, and those who might be able to produce texts for use in education; and in the long term, a plan to increase the number of

qualified representatives of the Romany community working in pre-school and school education.

To find out more about this work, read Appendix *1.Teaching for Romany school students in Sweden—a report on the current situation*, published by Skolverket, April 2001.

IV. EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

What impact assessment and evaluation has been conducted on curriculum reform in the area of life skills? What lessons have been learnt?

Within this field, we can note that a great deal remains to be done with regard to the evaluation of how well the national curricula provide students and teachers with the support and guidance they need in their work to develop life-skills. That being said, the Agency is currently conducting an analysis of how one can assess schools' work in raising students' and teachers' levels of awareness of questions concerning common values, and of how to deal with antagonism that arises as a result of value conflicts. There is an account of parts of this analytical work in the above-mentioned report *Democracy in Swedish education*.

1. The programme of training for head-teachers

The question of how individual schools can work with the question of common values has been incorporated into the programme of training for head-teachers. An evaluation of how this was received by the head-teachers who followed the first such course has been carried out, and the evaluation of the second batch of head-teachers to have taken the course is currently in progress. This is dealt with in *Från politik till praktik* [From policy to practice]. Skolverket, 2001.

2. The annual statistical report

The Agency's annual statistical report always looks at 'students at risk'. What percentage of students are not attaining the nationally agreed educational objectives? What percentage of students on the different national study programmes at upper-secondary level are not completing their courses? What proportion of these students are from a non-Swedish background?

3. Development dialogues

The Agency has also been specifically instructed by the government to provide support to those municipal authorities that need to develop their educational approach with regard to the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic. This large-scale initiative is entitled 'Development dialogues'; what the dialogues entail is that teams from the Agency sit down together with representatives of the municipal authorities in question—local politicians, civil servants, school managers and teachers—and analyse what initiatives need to be taken in that particular municipality in order for all students to be able to achieve the minimum educational standards laid down at national level (which, to put it briefly, stipulate that all students, on completing comprehensive-level education, are to have attained such a level that they can be awarded at least a 'pass' grade in the core subjects of Swedish, mathematics and English).

4. Reports on Mother-tongue tuition

With regard to the measures concerned specifically with students whose mother-tongue is a language other than Swedish, the Agency has initiated a certain amount of research and methodological development. At regular intervals the government requests analyses and proposals for measures, such as changes to statutes or financial support for specific initiatives. In the first half of 2000, the Agency submitted a report to the government looking at developments in the teaching of the national minority languages following their recognition as official national minority languages. Following the report, the Agency received funding to support competence development for teachers of Finnish and Saami, and for Roma involved in education. Early in 2002, the Agency will be conducting a similar review of teaching in all the minority and immigrant languages. This review will look both at the teaching of these languages as school subjects, and at the use of the languages when teaching other subjects.

5. Development project on social inclusion

In collaboration with the Regional Development Centre at the University of Malmö and fifteen or so schools situated in areas where a very high proportion of the population is from immigrant backgrounds, the Agency is conducting a project with the aim of developing means and methods for measuring success at school in other ways than the traditional assessment of academic knowledge. This is important—for it is a fact that a great deal of exciting, positive work is being carried on in schools of this kind, where the students, even though they are situated in areas characterized by a high level of marginalization and exclusion, feel that they have a future. The point of departure for this project is a report entitled *Success in schools situated in areas characterized by a high degree of marginalization and exclusion—a report to the government* (published by Skolverket, 2001, only available in Swedish).

Notes

1. From *Education for all*, an information booklet from the Swedish National Agency for Education. The National Agency for Education—known in Swedish as *Skolverket*—is the national body responsible for follow-up activity, evaluation, development and supervision of the school system in Sweden. Its mission is to help ensure the development of Swedish schools such that the reality of everyday schooling is kept in line with the objectives of national educational

policy. In addition, the agency is expected to draw up syllabuses and grade criteria, issue educational directives and approve independent schools.

2. The term 'from an immigrant background' is used to designate students who have either immigrated themselves, or at least one of whose parents was born outside Sweden. The term 'immigrant' is used to refer to persons who have moved to Sweden from another country, irrespective of the reason why they have moved.
3. You can find more information about the Swedish school system on our website: http://www.skolverket.se. All the reports produced by the agency mentioned in this paper are also available on the site.
4. You will find the full text of the curricula on our website: http://www.skolverket.se

ANNEX I:

Agenda of the regional seminar (Vilnius, 5–8 December 2001)

Tuesday, 4 December 2001:

Arrival of participants, registration, meeting of moderators.

Wednesday, 5 December 2001

08:30 - 09:00	Registration
09:00 – 10:00	**Opening ceremony** Welcome and introduction of participants
10:00 - 10:30	Coffee break
10:30 – 11:30	**Keynote address**: *Education systems, social cohesion and inequality*, Walo Hutmacher , Professor, University of Geneva.
11:30 – 12:00	**Presentation**: *Citizenship education to counter social exclusion, and violence*, Conclusions from the forty-sixth session of the International Conference on Education (September, 2001), Sobhi Tawil, IBE.
12:00 – 13:30	Lunch break
13:30 - 15:00	*Curriculum reform: meeting the challenges of quality, equity and social inclusion.* **Country presentations I** (*) Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Estonia, Russia
15:00 - 15:30	Coffee break
15:30- 17:00	**Country presentations II** (*) Finland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Germany
17:00 - 18:00	**Debate**: reactions from the panel and general discussion.

Thursday, 6 December 2001

08:30 - 12:00	**School** visits and exchanges with teachers
12:00 - 13:30	Lunch break
13:30 - 15:30	**Thematic working groups**: 1. Skills development and employability (moderator: S. Gvirtz); 2. Cultural diversity and citizenship (moderator: M. Arlow); 3. Educational exclusion (moderator: W. Hutmacher).
15:30 - 16:00	Coffee break
16:00 –18:00	**Group presentations and debate** (40 min. for each theme).

Friday, 7 December 2001

08:30 – 09:00	**Introduction:** *Curricula reform and cross-cutting skills for life.*
09:00 – 10:15	**Case Study I**: *Curriculum reforms in Latin America: evidence from Argentina.* S. Gvirtz, Professor, Universidad de San Andrés, Escuela de Educación, Victoria, Provincia de Buenos-Aires, Argentina.
10:15 – 10:45	Coffee break
10:45 – 12:00	**Case Study II**: *Challenges of social inclusion in Northern Ireland: citizenship and life skills.* M. Arlow, Director, Social Civic and Political Education, University of Ulster, Northern Ireland, UK.
12:00 -13:30	Lunch break
13:30 - 15:3 0	**Working groups**: *Curriculum development and implementation for life skills: monitoring of immediate outputs and long-term outcomes (3 groups).*
15:30 - 16:00	Coffee break
16:00 - 17:30	**Presentations of the working groups.**
17:30 - 18:00	**Debate**: Regional co-operation and communication for curriculum development.

Saturday, 8 December 2001

09:00 - 10:30	**Round-table**: *Needs and demands for curriculum development in rapidly changing societies*: With members of Lithuanian National Education Forum
10:30 -11:00	Coffee break
11:00 - 12:00	Round-table (continued).
12:00 - 12:30	**Closing session**: presentation of final report, reactions and evaluation.

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(*) See *Guidelines for country presentations* in section II of information note.

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